

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

THE NARRATIVE OF VINCENT GILMORE, SOLICITOR,
OF CHANCERY-LANE, LONDON.

I.

I WRITE these lines at the request of my friend, Mr. Walter Hartright. They are intended to convey a description of certain events which seriously affected Miss Fairlie's interests, and which took place after the period of Mr. Hartright's departure from Limmeridge House.

There is no need for me to say whether my own opinion does or does not sanction the disclosure of the remarkable family story, of which my narrative forms an important component part. Mr. Hartright has taken that responsibility on himself; and circumstances yet to be related will show that he has amply earned the right to do so, if he chooses to exercise it. The plan he has adopted for presenting the story to others, in the most truthful and most vivid manner, requires that it should be told, at each successive stage in the march of events, by the persons who were directly concerned in those events at the time of their occurrence. My appearance here, as narrator, is the necessary consequence of this arrangement. I was present during the sojourn of Sir Percival Glyde in Cumberland, and was personally concerned in one important result of his short residence under Mr. Fairlie's roof. It is my duty, therefore, to add these new links to the chain of events, and to take up the chain itself at the point where, for the present only, Mr. Hartright has dropped it.

I arrived at Limmeridge House, on a Friday in the week, either at the end of October or the beginning of November—it is not material to my present purpose to say precisely which.

My object was to remain at Mr. Fairlie's until the arrival of Sir Percival Glyde. If that event led to the appointment of any given day for Sir Percival's union with Miss Fairlie, I was to take the necessary instructions back with me to London, and to occupy myself in drawing the lady's marriage settlement.

On the Friday, I was not favoured by Mr. Fairlie with an interview. He had been, or had fancied himself to be, an invalid for years past; and he was not well enough to receive me. Miss Halcombe was the first member of the family whom I saw. She met me at the house

door; and introduced me to Mr. Hartright, who had been staying at Limmeridge for some time past.

I did not see Miss Fairlie until later in the day, at dinner time. She was not looking well, and I was sorry to observe it. She is a sweet, lovable girl, as amiable and attentive to everyone about her as her excellent mother used to be—though, personally speaking, she takes after her father. Mrs. Fairlie had dark eyes and hair; and her elder daughter, Miss Halcombe, strongly reminds me of her. Miss Fairlie played to us in the evening—not so well as usual, I thought. We had a rubber at whist; a mere profanation, so far as play was concerned, of that noble game. I had been favourably impressed by Mr. Hartright, on our first introduction to one another; but I soon discovered that he was not free from the social failings incidental to his age. There are three things that none of the young men of the present generation can do. They can't sit over their wine; they can't play at whist; and they can't pay a lady a compliment. Mr. Hartright was no exception to the general rule. Otherwise, even in those early days and on that short acquaintance, he struck me as being a modest and gentlemanlike young man.

So the Friday passed. I say nothing about the more serious matters which engaged my attention on that day—the anonymous letter to Miss Fairlie; the measures I thought it right to adopt when the matter was mentioned to me; and the conviction I entertained that every possible explanation of the circumstances would be readily afforded by Sir Percival Glyde, having all been fully noticed, as I understand, in the narrative which precedes this.

On the Saturday, Mr. Hartright had left before I got down to breakfast. Miss Fairlie kept her room all day; and Miss Halcombe appeared to me to be out of spirits. The house was not what it used to be in the time of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Fairlie. I took a walk by myself in the forenoon; and looked about at some of the places which I first saw when I was staying at Limmeridge to transact family business, more than thirty years since. They were not what they used to be, either.

At two o'clock Mr. Fairlie sent to say he was well enough to see me. He had not altered, at any rate, since I first knew him. His talk was to the same purpose as usual—all about himself and his ailments, his wonderful coins, and his

matchless Rembrandt etchings. The moment I tried to speak of the business that had brought me to his house, he shut his eyes and said I "upset" him. I persisted in upsetting him by returning again and again to the subject. All I could ascertain was that he looked on his niece's marriage as a settled thing, that her father had sanctioned it, that he sanctioned it himself, that it was a desirable marriage, and that he should be personally rejoiced when the worry of it was over. As to the settlement, if I would consult his niece, and afterwards dive as deeply as I pleased into my own knowledge of the family affairs, and get everything ready, and limit his share in the business, as guardian, to saying, Yes, at the right moment—why of course he would meet my views, and everybody else's views, with infinite pleasure. In the mean time, there I saw him, a helpless sufferer, confined to his room. Did I think he looked as if he wanted teasing? No. Then why tease him?

I might, perhaps, have been a little astonished at this extraordinary absence of all self-assertion on Mr. Fairlie's part, in the character of guardian, if my knowledge of the family affairs had not been sufficient to remind me that he was a single man, and that he had nothing more than a life-interest in the Limmeridge property. As matters stood, therefore, I was neither surprised nor disappointed at the result of the interview. Mr. Fairlie had simply justified my expectations—and there was an end of it.

Sunday was a dull day, out of doors and in. A letter arrived for me from Sir Percival Glyde's solicitor, acknowledging the receipt of my copy of the anonymous letter, and my accompanying statement of the case. Miss Fairlie joined us in the afternoon, looking pale and depressed, and altogether unlike herself. I had some talk with her, and ventured on a delicate allusion to Sir Percival. She listened, and said nothing. All other subjects she pursued willingly; but this subject she allowed to drop. I began to doubt whether she might not be repenting of her engagement—just as young ladies often do, when repentance comes too late.

On Monday Sir Percival Glyde arrived.

I found him to be a most prepossessing man, so far as manners and appearance were concerned. He looked rather older than I had expected; his head being bald over the forehead, and his face somewhat marked and worn. But his movements were as active and his spirits as high as a young man's. His meeting with Miss Halcombe was delightfully hearty and unaffected; and his reception of me, upon my being presented to him, was so easy and pleasant that we got on together like old friends. Miss Fairlie was not with us when he arrived, but she entered the room about ten minutes afterwards. Sir Percival rose and paid his compliments with perfect grace. His evident concern on seeing the change for the worse in the young lady's looks was expressed with a mixture of tenderness and respect, with an unassuming delicacy of tone, voice, and manner, which did equal credit to his good breeding and his good sense. I was rather sur-

prised, under these circumstances, to see that Miss Fairlie continued to be constrained and uneasy in his presence, and that she took the first opportunity of leaving the room again. Sir Percival neither noticed the restraint in her reception of him, nor her sudden withdrawal from our society. He had not obtruded his attentions on her while she was present, and he did not embarrass Miss Halcombe by any allusion to her departure when she was gone. His tact and taste were never at fault on this or on any other occasion while I was in his company at Limmeridge House.

As soon as Miss Fairlie had left the room, he spared us all embarrassment on the subject of the anonymous letter, by adverting to it of his own accord. He had stopped in London on his way from Hampshire; had seen his solicitor; had read the documents forwarded by me; and had travelled on to Cumberland, anxious to satisfy our minds by the speediest and the fullest explanation that words could convey. On hearing him express himself to this effect, I offered him the original letter which I had kept for his inspection. He thanked me, and declined to look at it; saying that he had seen the copy, and that he was quite willing to leave the original in our hands.

The statement itself, on which he immediately entered, was as simple and satisfactory as I had all along anticipated it would be.

Mrs. Catherick, he informed us, had, in past years, laid him under some obligations for faithful services rendered to his family connexions and to himself. She had been doubly unfortunate in being married to a husband who had deserted her, and in having an only child whose mental faculties had been in a disturbed condition from a very early age. Although her marriage had removed her to a part of Hampshire far distant from the neighbourhood in which Sir Percival's property was situated, he had taken care not to lose sight of her; his friendly feeling towards the poor woman, in consideration of her past services, having been greatly strengthened by his admiration of the patience and courage with which she supported her calamities. In course of time, the symptoms of mental affliction in her unhappy daughter increased to such a serious extent, as to make it a matter of necessity to place her under proper medical care. Mrs. Catherick herself recognised this necessity; but she also felt the prejudice common to persons occupying her respectable station, against allowing her child to be admitted, as a pauper, into a public Asylum. Sir Percival had respected this prejudice, as he respected honest independence of feeling in any rank of life; and had resolved to mark his grateful sense of Mrs. Catherick's early attachment to the interests of himself and his family, by defraying the expense of her daughter's maintenance in a trustworthy private Asylum. To her mother's regret, and to his own regret, the unfortunate creature had discovered the share which circumstances had induced him to take in placing her under restraint, and had

conceived the most intense hatred and distrust of him in consequence. To that hatred and distrust—which had expressed itself in various ways in the Asylum—the anonymous letter written, after her escape, was plainly attributable. If Miss Halcombe's or Mr. Gilmore's recollection of the document did not confirm that view, or if they wished for any additional particulars about the Asylum (the address of which he mentioned, as well as the names and addresses of the two doctors on whose certificates the patient was admitted), he was ready to answer any question and to clear up any uncertainty. He had done his duty to the unhappy young woman, by instructing his solicitor to spare no expense in tracing her, and in restoring her once more to medical care; and he was now only anxious to do his duty towards Miss Fairlie and towards her family, in the same plain, straightforward way.

I was the first to speak in answer to this appeal. My own course was plain to me. It is the great beauty of the Law that it can dispute any human statement, made under any circumstances, and reduced to any form. If I had felt professionally called upon to set up a case against Sir Percival Glyde, on the strength of his own explanation, I could have done so beyond all doubt. But my duty did not lie in this direction: my function was of the purely judicial kind. I was to weigh the explanation we had just heard; to allow all due force to the high reputation of the gentleman who offered it; and to decide honestly whether the probabilities, on Sir Percival's own showing, were plainly with him, or plainly against him. My own conviction was that they were plainly with him; and I accordingly declared that his explanation was, to my mind, unquestionably a satisfactory one.

Miss Halcombe, after looking at me very earnestly, said a few words, on her side, to the same effect—with a certain hesitation of manner, however, which the circumstances did not seem to me to warrant. I am unable to say, positively, whether Sir Percival noticed this or not. My opinion is that he did; seeing that he pointedly resumed the subject, although he might, now, with all propriety, have allowed it to drop.

"If my plain statement of facts had only been addressed to Mr. Gilmore," he said, "I should consider any further reference to this unhappy matter as unnecessary. I may fairly expect Mr. Gilmore, as a gentleman, to believe me on my word; and when he has done me that justice, all discussion of the subject between us has come to an end. But my position with a lady is not the same. I owe to her, what I would concede to no man alive—a *proof* of the truth of my assertion. You cannot ask for that proof, Miss Halcombe; and it is therefore my duty to you, and still more to Miss Fairlie, to offer it. May I beg that you will write at once to the mother of this unfortunate woman—to Mrs. Catherick—to ask for her testimony in support of the explanation which I have just offered to you."

I saw Miss Halcombe change colour, and look a little uneasy. Sir Percival's suggestion, politely as it was expressed, appeared to her, as it appeared to me, to point, very delicately, at the hesitation which her manner had betrayed a moment or two since.

"I hope, Sir Percival, you don't do me the injustice to suppose that I distrust you," she said, quickly.

"Certainly not, Miss Halcombe. I make my proposal purely as an act of attention to you. Will you excuse my obstinacy if I still venture to press it?"

He walked to the writing-table, as he spoke; drew a chair to it; and opened the paper-case.

"Let me beg you to write the note," he said, "as a favour to me. It need not occupy you more than a few minutes. You have only to ask Mrs. Catherick two questions. First, if her daughter was placed in the Asylum with her knowledge and approval. Secondly, if the share I took in the matter was such as to merit the expression of her gratitude towards myself? Mr. Gilmore's mind is at ease on this unpleasant subject; and your mind is at ease—pray set my mind at ease also, by writing the note."

"You oblige me to grant your request, Sir Percival, when I would much rather refuse it."

With those words Miss Halcombe rose from her place, and went to the writing-table. Sir Percival thanked her, handed her a pen, and then walked away towards the fireplace. Miss Fairlie's little Italian greyhound was lying on the rug. He held out his hand, and called to the dog good-humouredly.

"Come, Nina," he said; we remember each other, don't we?"

The little beast, cowardly and cross-grained as pet-dogs usually are, looked up at him sharply, shrank away from his outstretched hand, whined, shivered, and hid itself under a sofa. It was scarcely possible that he could have been put out by such a trifle as a dog's reception of him—but I observed, nevertheless, that he walked away towards the window very suddenly.

Miss Halcombe was not long in writing the note. When it was done, she rose from the writing-table, and handed the open sheet of paper to Sir Percival. He bowed; took it from her; folded it up immediately, without looking at the contents; sealed it; wrote the address; and handed it back to her in silence. I never saw anything more gracefully and more becomingly done, in my life.

"You insist on my posting this letter, Sir Percival?" said Miss Halcombe.

"I beg you will post it," he answered. "And now that it is written and sealed up, allow me to ask one or two last questions about the unhappy woman to whom it refers. I have read the communication which Mr. Gilmore kindly addressed to my solicitor, describing the circumstances under which the writer of the anonymous letter was identified. But there are certain points to which that statement does not refer. Did Anne Catherick see Miss Fairlie?"

"Certainly not," replied Miss Halcombe.

"Did she see you?"

"No."

"She saw nobody from the house, then, except a certain Mr. Hartright, who accidentally met with her in the churchyard here?"

"Nobody else."

"Mr. Hartright was employed at Limmeridge as a drawing-master, I believe? Is he a member of one of the Water-Colour Societies?"

"I believe he is," answered Miss Halcombe.

He paused for a moment, as if he was thinking over the last answer, and then added:

"Did you find out where Anne Catherick was living, when she was in this neighbourhood?"

"Yes. At a farm on the moor, called Todd's Corner."

"It is a duty we all owe to the poor creature herself to trace her," continued Sir Percival.

"She may have said something at Todd's Corner which may help us to find her. I will go there, and make inquiries on the chance. In the mean time, as I cannot prevail on myself to discuss this painful subject with Miss Fairlie, may I beg, Miss Halcombe, that you will kindly undertake to give her the necessary explanation, deferring it of course until you have received the reply to that note."

Miss Halcombe promised to comply with his request. He thanked her—nodded pleasantly—and left us, to go and establish himself in his own room. As he opened the door, the cross-grained greyhound poked out her sharp muzzle from under the sofa, and barked and snapped at him.

"A good morning's work, Miss Halcombe," I said, as soon as we were alone. "Here is an anxious day well ended already."

"Yes," she answered; "no doubt. I am very glad your mind is satisfied."

"My mind! Surely, with that note in your hand, your mind is at ease too?"

"Oh, yes—how can it be otherwise? I know the thing could not be," she went on, speaking more to herself than to me; "but I almost wish Walter Hartright had staid here long enough to be present at the explanation, and to hear the proposal to me to write this note."

I was a little surprised—perhaps a little piqued, also, by these last words.

"Events, it is true, connected Mr. Hartright very remarkably with the affair of the letter," I said; "and I readily admit that he conducted himself, all things considered, with great delicacy and discretion. But I am quite at a loss to understand what useful influence his presence could have exercised in relation to the effect of Sir Percival's statement on your mind or mine."

"It was only a fancy," she said, absently. "There is no need to discuss it, Mr. Gilmore. Your experience ought to be, and is, the best guide I can desire."

I did not altogether like her thrusting the whole responsibility, in this marked manner, on my shoulders. If Mr. Fairlie had done it, I should not have been surprised. But resolute, clear-minded Miss Halcombe, was the very last

person in the world whom I should have expected to find shrinking from the expression of an opinion of her own.

"If any doubts still trouble you," I said, "why not mention them to me at once? Tell me plainly, have you any reason to distrust Sir Percival Glyde?"

"None whatever."

"Do you see anything improbable, or contradictory, in his explanation?"

"How can I say I do, after the proof he has offered me of the truth of it? Can there be better testimony in his favour, Mr. Gilmore, than the testimony of the woman's mother?"

"None better. If the answer to your note of inquiry proves to be satisfactory, I, for one, cannot see what more any friend of Sir Percival's can possibly expect from him."

"Then we will post the note," she said, rising to leave the room, "and dismiss all further reference to the subject, until the answer arrives. Don't attach any weight to my hesitation. I can give no better reason for it than that I have been over-anxious about Laura lately; and anxiety, Mr. Gilmore, unsettles the strongest of us."

She left me abruptly; her naturally firm voice faltering as she spoke those last words. A sensitive, vehement, passionate nature—a woman of ten thousand in these trivial, superficial times. I had known her from her earliest years; I had seen her tested, as she grew up, in more than one trying family crisis, and my long experience made me attach an importance to her hesitation under the circumstances here detailed, which I should certainly not have felt in the case of another woman. I could see no cause for any uneasiness or any doubt; but she had made me a little uneasy, and a little doubtful, nevertheless. In my youth, I should have chafed and fretted under the irritation of my own unreasonable state of mind. In my age, I knew better; and went out philosophically to walk it off.

II.

We all met again at dinner-time.

Sir Percival was in such boisterous high spirits that I hardly recognised him as the same man whose quiet tact, refinement, and good sense had impressed me so strongly at the interview of the morning. The only trace of his former self that I could detect, reappeared, every now and then, in his manner towards Miss Fairlie. A look or a word from her, suspended his loudest laugh, checked his gayest flow of talk, and rendered him all attention to her, and to no one else at table, in an instant. Although he never openly tried to draw her into the conversation, he never lost the slightest chance she gave him of letting her drift into it by accident, and of saying the words to her, under those favourable circumstances, which a man with less tact and delicacy would have pointedly addressed to her the moment they occurred to him. Rather to my surprise, Miss Fairlie appeared to be sensible of his attentions, without being moved by them. She was a little confused from time to time,

when he looked at her, or spoke to her; but she never warmed towards him. Rank, fortune, good breeding, good looks, the respect of a gentleman, and the devotion of a lover, were all humbly placed at her feet, and, so far as appearances went, were all offered in vain.

On the next day, the Tuesday, Sir Percival went in the morning (taking one of the servants with him as a guide) to Todd's Corner. His inquiries, as I afterwards heard, led to no results. On his return, he had an interview with Mr. Fairlie; and in the afternoon he and Miss Halcombe rode out together. Nothing else happened worthy of record. The evening passed as usual. There was no change in Sir Percival and no change in Miss Fairlie.

The Wednesday's post brought with it an event—the reply from Mrs. Catherick. I took a copy of the document, which I have preserved, and which I may as well present in this place. It ran as follows:

"MADAM,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, inquiring whether my daughter, Anne, was placed under medical superintendence with my knowledge and approval, and whether the share taken in the matter by Sir Percival Glyde was such as to merit the expression of my gratitude towards that gentleman. Be pleased to accept my answer in the affirmative to both those questions, and believe me to remain, your obedient servant,

"JANE ANNE CATHERICK."

Short, sharp, and to the point: in form, rather a business-like letter for a woman to write; in substance, as plain a confirmation as could be desired of Sir Percival Glyde's statement. This was my opinion, and with certain minor reservations, Miss Halcombe's opinion also. Sir Percival, when the letter was shown to him, did not appear to be struck by the sharp, short tone of it. He told us that Mrs. Catherick was a woman of few words, a clear-headed, straightforward, unimaginative person, who wrote briefly and plainly, just as she spoke.

The next duty to be accomplished, now that the answer had been received, was to acquaint Miss Fairlie with Sir Percival's explanation. Miss Halcombe had undertaken to do this, and had left the room to go to her sister, when she suddenly returned again, and sat down by the easy-chair in which I was reading the newspaper. Sir Percival had gone out a minute before, to look at the stables, and no one was in the room but ourselves.

"I suppose we have really and truly done all we can?" she said, turning and twisting Mrs. Catherick's letter in her hand.

"If we are friends of Sir Percival's, who know him and trust him, we have done all, and more than all, that is necessary," I answered, a little annoyed by this return of her hesitation. "But if we are enemies who suspect him——"

"That alternative is not even to be thought of," she interposed. "We are Sir Percival's friends; and, if generosity and forbearance can

add to our regard for him, we ought to be Sir Percival's admirers as well. You know that he saw Mr. Fairlie yesterday, and that he afterwards went out with me?"

"Yes. I saw you riding away together."

"We began the ride by talking about Anne Catherick, and about the singular manner in which Mr. Hartright met with her. But we soon dropped that subject; and Sir Percival spoke next, in the most unselfish terms, of his engagement with Laura. He said he had observed that she was out of spirits, and he was willing, if not informed to the contrary, to attribute to that cause the alteration in her manner towards him during his present visit. If, however, there was any other more serious reason for the change, he would entreat that no constraint might be placed on her inclinations either by Mr. Fairlie or by me. All he asked, in that case, was that she would recal to mind, for the last time, what the circumstances were under which the engagement between them was made, and what his conduct had been from the beginning of the courtship to the present time. If, after due reflection on those two subjects, she seriously desired that he should withdraw his pretensions to the honour of becoming her husband—and if she would tell him so plainly, with her own lips—he would sacrifice himself by leaving her perfectly free to withdraw from the engagement.

"No man could say more than that, Miss Halcombe. As to my experience, few men in his situation would have said as much."

She paused after I had spoken those words, and looked at me with a singular expression of perplexity and distress.

"I accuse nobody and I suspect nothing," she broke out, abruptly. "But I cannot and will not accept the responsibility of persuading Laura to this marriage."

"That is exactly the course which Sir Percival Glyde has himself requested you to take," I replied, in astonishment. "He has begged you not to force her inclinations."

"And he indirectly obliges me to force them, if I give her his message."

"How can that possibly be?"

"Consult your own knowledge of Laura, Mr. Gilmore. If I tell her to reflect on the circumstances of her engagement, I at once appeal to two of the strongest feelings in her nature—to her love for her father's memory, and to her strict regard for truth. You know that she never broke a promise in her life; you know that she entered on this engagement at the beginning of her father's fatal illness, and that he spoke hopefully and happily of her marriage to Sir Percival Glyde on his death-bed."

I own that I was a little shocked at this view of the case.

"Surely," I said, "you don't mean to infer that when Sir Percival spoke to you yesterday, he speculated on such a result as you have just mentioned?"

Her frank, fearless face answered for her before she spoke.

"Do you think I would remain an instant in the company of any man whom I suspected of such baseness as that?" she asked, angrily.

I liked to feel her hearty indignation flash out on me in that way. We see so much malice and so little indignation in my profession.

"In that case," I said, "excuse me if I tell you, in our legal phrase, that you are travelling out of the record. Whatever the consequences may be, Sir Percival has a right to expect that your sister should carefully consider her engagement from every reasonable point of view before she claims her release from it. If that unlucky letter has prejudiced her against him, go at once, and tell her that he has cleared himself in your eyes and in mine. What objection can she urge against him after that? What excuse can she possibly have for changing her mind about a man whom she virtually accepted for her husband more than two years ago?"

"In the eyes of law and reason, Mr. Gilmore, no excuse, I dare say. If she still hesitates, and if I still hesitate, you must attribute our strange conduct, if you like, to caprice in both cases, and we must bear the imputation as well as we can."

With those words, she suddenly rose, and left me. When a sensible woman has a serious question put to her, and evades it by a flippant answer, it is a sure sign, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, that she has something to conceal. I returned to the perusal of the newspaper, strongly suspecting that Miss Halcombe and Miss Fairlie had a secret between them which they were keeping from Sir Percival and keeping from me. I thought this hard on both of us—especially on Sir Percival.

My doubts—or, to speak more correctly, my convictions—were confirmed by Miss Halcombe's language and manner, when I saw her again, later in the day. She was suspiciously brief and reserved in telling me the result of her interview with her sister. Miss Fairlie, it appeared, had listened quietly while the affair of the letter was placed before her in the right point of view; but when Miss Halcombe next proceeded to say that the object of Sir Percival's visit at Limmeridge was to prevail on her to let a day be fixed for the marriage, she checked all further reference to the subject by begging for time. If Sir Percival would consent to spare her for the present, she would undertake to give him his final answer, before the end of the year. She pleaded for this delay with such anxiety and agitation, that Miss Halcombe had promised to use her influence, if necessary, to obtain it; and there, at Miss Fairlie's earnest entreaty, all further discussion of the marriage question had ended.

The purely temporary arrangement thus proposed might have been convenient enough to the young lady; but it proved somewhat embarrassing to the writer of these lines. That morning's post had brought a letter from my partner, which obliged me to return to town the next day, by the afternoon train. It was extremely probable that I should find no second

opportunity of presenting myself at Limmeridge House during the remainder of the year. In that case, supposing Miss Fairlie ultimately decided on holding to her engagement, my necessary personal communication with her, before I drew her settlement, would become something like a downright impossibility; and we should be obliged to commit to writing questions which ought always to be discussed on both sides by word of mouth. I said nothing about this difficulty, until Sir Percival had been consulted on the subject of the desired delay. He was too gallant a gentleman not to grant the request immediately. When Miss Halcombe informed me of this, I told her that I must absolutely speak to her sister, before I left Limmeridge; and it was, therefore, arranged that I should see Miss Fairlie in her own sitting-room, the next morning. She did not come down to dinner, or join us in the evening. Indisposition was the excuse; and I thought Sir Percival looked, as well he might, a little annoyed when he heard of it.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, I went up to Miss Fairlie's sitting-room. The poor girl looked so pale and sad, and came forward to welcome me so readily and prettily, that the resolution to lecture her on her caprice and indecision, which I had been forming all the way up-stairs, failed me on the spot. I led her back to the chair from which she had risen, and placed myself opposite to her. Her cross-grained pet greyhound was in the room, and I fully expected a barking and snapping reception. Strange to say, the whimsical little brute falsified my expectations by jumping into my lap, and poking its sharp muzzle familiarly into my hand the moment I sat down.

"You used often to sit on my knee when you were a child, my dear," I said, "and now your little dog seems determined to succeed you in the vacant throne. Is that pretty drawing your doing?"

I pointed to a little album, which lay on the table by her side, and which she had evidently been looking over when I came in. The page that lay open had a small water-colour landscape very neatly mounted on it. This was the drawing which had suggested my question: an idle question enough—but how could I begin to talk of business to her the moment I opened my lips?

"No," she said, looking away from the drawing rather confusedly; "it is not my doing."

Her fingers had a restless habit, which I remembered in her, as a child, of always playing with the first thing that came to hand, whenever any one was talking to her. On this occasion they wandered to the album, and toyed absently about the margin of the little water-colour drawing. The expression of melancholy deepened on her face. She did not look at the drawing, or look at me. Her eyes moved uneasily from object to object in the room; betraying plainly that she suspected what my purpose was in coming to speak to her. Seeing that, I thought it best to get to the purpose with as little delay as possible.

"One of the errands, my dear, which brings me here is to bid you good-by," I began. "I must get back to London to-day; and, before I leave, I want to have a word with you on the subject of your own affairs."

"I am very sorry you are going, Mr. Gilmore," she said, looking at me kindly. "It is like the happy old times to have you here."

"I hope I may be able to come back, and recollect those pleasant memories once more," I continued; "but as there is some uncertainty about the future, I must take my opportunity when I can get it, and speak to you now. I am your old lawyer and your old friend; and I may remind you, I am sure, without offence, of the possibility of your marrying Sir Percival Glyde."

She took her hand off the little album as suddenly as if it had turned hot and burnt her. Her fingers twined together nervously in her lap; her eyes looked down again at the floor; and an expression of constraint settled on her face which looked almost like an expression of pain.

"Is it absolutely necessary to speak of my marriage engagement?" she asked, in low tones.

"It is necessary to refer to it," I answered; "but not to dwell on it. Let us merely say that you may marry, or that you may not marry. In the first case, I must be prepared, beforehand, to draw your settlement; and I ought not to do that without, as a matter of politeness, first consulting you. This may be my only chance of hearing what your wishes are. Let us, therefore, suppose the case of your marrying, and let me inform you, in as few words as possible, what your position is now, and what you may make it, if you please, in the future."

I explained to her the object of a marriage-settlement; and then told her exactly what her prospects were—in the first place, on her coming of age, and, in the second place, on the decease of her uncle—marking the distinction between the property in which she had a life interest only, and the property which was left at her own control. She listened attentively, with the constrained expression still on her face, and her hands still nervously clasped together in her lap.

"And, now," I said, in conclusion, "tell me if you can think of any condition which, in the case we have supposed, you would wish me to make for you—subject, of course, to your guardian's approval, as you are not yet of age."

She moved uneasily in her chair—then looked in my face, on a sudden, very earnestly.

"If it does happen," she began, faintly; "if I am——"

"If you are married," I added, helping her out.

"Don't let him part me from Marian," she cried, with a sudden outbreak of energy. "Oh, Mr. Gilmore, pray make it law that Marian is to live with me!"

Under other circumstances, I might perhaps have been amused at this essentially feminine interpretation of my question, and of the long explanation which had preceded it. But her looks and tones, when she spoke, were of a kind to make me more than serious—they distressed

me. Her words, few as they were, betrayed a desperate clinging to the past which boded ill for the future.

"Your having Marian Halcombe to live with you, can easily be settled by private arrangement," I said. "You hardly understood my question, I think. It referred to your own property—to the disposal of your money. Supposing you were to make a will, when you come of age, who would you like the money to go to?"

"Marian has been mother and sister both to me," said the good, affectionate girl, her pretty blue eyes glistening while she spoke. "May I leave it to Marian, Mr. Gilmore?"

"Certainly, my love," I answered. "But remember what a large sum it is. Would you like it all to go to Miss Halcombe?"

She hesitated; her colour came and went; and her hand stole back again to the little album.

"Not all of it," she said. "There is some one else, besides Marian——"

She stopped; her colour heightened; and the fingers of the hand that rested upon the album beat gently on the margin of the drawing, as if her memory had set them going mechanically with the remembrance of a favourite tune.

"You mean some other member of the family besides Miss Halcombe?" I suggested, seeing her at a loss to proceed.

The heightening colour spread to her forehead and her neck, and the nervous fingers suddenly clasped themselves fast round the edge of the book.

"There is some one else," she said, not noticing my last words, though she had evidently heard them; "there is some one else who might like a little keepsake, if—if I might leave it. There would be no harm, if I should die first——"

She paused again. The colour that had spread over her cheeks suddenly, as suddenly left them. The hand on the album resigned its hold, trembled a little, and moved the book away from her. She looked at me for an instant—then turned her head aside in the chair. Her handkerchief fell to the floor as she changed her position, and she hurriedly hid her face from me in her hands.

Sad! To remember her, as I did, the liveliest, happiest child that ever laughed the day through; and to see her now, in the flower of her age and her beauty, so broken and so brought down as this!

In the distress that she caused me, I forgot the years that had passed, and the change they had made in our position towards one another. I moved my chair close to her, and picked up her handkerchief from the carpet, and drew her hands from her face gently. "Don't cry, my love," I said, and dried the tears that were gathering in her eyes, with my own hand, as if she had been the little Laura Fairlie of ten long years ago.

It was the best way I could have taken to compose her. She laid her head on my shoulder, and smiled faintly through her tears.

"I am very sorry for forgetting myself," she

said, artlessly. "I have not been well—I have felt sadly weak and nervous lately; and I often cry without reason when I am alone. I am better now; I can answer you as I ought, Mr. Gilmore, I can indeed."

"No, no, my dear," I replied; "we will consider the subject as done with, for the present. You have said enough to sanction my taking the best possible care of your interests; and we can settle details at another opportunity. Let us have done with business, now, and talk of something else."

I led her at once into speaking on other topics. In ten minutes' time, she was in better spirits; and I rose to take my leave.

"Come here again," she said, earnestly. "I will try to be worthier of your kind feeling for me and for my interests if you will only come again."

Still clinging to the past—the past which I represented to her, in my way, as Miss Halcombe did in hers! It troubled me sorely to see her looking back, at the beginning of her career, just as I look back, at the end of mine.

"If I do come again, I hope I shall find you better," I said—"better and happier. God bless you, my dear."

She only answered by putting up her cheek to me to be kissed. Even lawyers have hearts; and mine ached a little as I took leave of her.

The whole interview between us had hardly lasted more than half an hour—she had not breathed a word, in my presence, to explain the mystery of her evident distress and dismay at the prospect of her marriage—and yet she had contrived to win me over to her side of the question, I neither knew how nor why. I had entered the room, feeling that Sir Percival Glyde had fair reason to complain of the manner in which she was treating him. I left it, secretly hoping that matters might end in her taking him at his word and claiming her release. A man of my age and experience ought to have known better than to vacillate in this unreasonable manner. I can make no excuse for myself; I can only tell the truth, and say—so it was.

The hour for my departure was now drawing near. I sent to Mr. Fairlie to say that I would wait on him to take leave if he liked, but that he must excuse my being rather in a hurry. He sent a message back, written in pencil on a slip of paper: "Kind love and best wishes, dear Gilmore. Hurry of any kind is inexpressibly injurious to me. Pray take care of yourself. Good-by."

Just before I left, I saw Miss Halcombe, for a moment, alone.

"Have you said all you wanted to Laura?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. "She is very weak and nervous—I am glad she has you to take care of her."

Miss Halcombe's sharp eyes studied my face attentively.

"You are altering your opinion about Laura," she said. "You are readier to make allowances for her than you were yesterday."

No sensible man ever engages, unprepared, in a fencing match of words with a woman. I only answered:

"Let me know what happens. I will do nothing till I hear from you."

She still looked hard in my face. "I wish it was all over, and well over, Mr. Gilmore—and so do you." With those words she left me.

Sir Percival most politely insisted on seeing me to the carriage door.

"If you are ever in my neighbourhood," he said, "pray don't forget that I am sincerely anxious to improve our acquaintance. The tried and trusted old friend of this family will be always a welcome visitor in any house of mine."

A really irresistible man—courteous, considerate, delightfully free from pride—a gentleman, every inch of him. As I drove away to the station, I felt as if I could cheerfully do anything to promote the interests of Sir Percival Glyde—anything in the world, except drawing the marriage settlement of his wife.

SINDBAD COME TRUE.

THE story of Sindbad the Sailor in the Arabian Nights, often referred to as the Arabian Odyssey, is treated with all due respect in Sir Emerson Tennent's work on Ceylon. Our old friend Sindbad there appears as an "Arabian mariner, whose voyages have had a world-wide renown, and who, more than any other author, ancient or modern, has contributed to familiarise Europe with the name and wonders of Serendib." Sir Emerson observes of him that he could not have lived in the reign of Haroun Alrashchid, who died in the year eight hundred and eight, his narratives being based on the recitals of Abou Zeyd and Massoudi, geographers whose date is about fifty years later. Concerning Ceylon, it is deduced from Sindbad's narrative that, while the sea-coast was known to the Arabians, the interior was little explored, and was to them a world of mystery. "Hence, what Sindbad relates of the shore and its inhabitants is devoid of exaggeration: in his first visit, the natives who received him were Malabars, one of whom had learned Arabic, and they were engaged in irrigating their rice lands from a tank. These are incidents which are characteristics of the north-western coast of Ceylon at the present day; and the commerce for which the island was remarkable in the ninth and tenth centuries is implied by the expression of Sindbad, that on the occasion of his next voyage, when bearing presents and a letter from the caliph to the King of Serendib, he embarked at Bassorah in a ship, and with him were many merchants."

Sir Emerson was told by a Kandzan chief of the universal belief of his countrymen that the elephants near death resort to a valley near Saffragam, among the mountains to the east of Adam's Peak, which is reached by a narrow pass with walls of rock on either side, and that they

lie down there to die by a lake of clear water. This, he observes, is a belief in harmony with the adventure of Sindbad when, after carrying the gifts to the King of Serrendib, he was wrecked, made a slave, employed in shooting elephants for the sake of their ivory; and one day, senseless from a fall, was carried away by the great elephant, who wound his trunk around him, and ceased not to proceed until he had taken him to a place where "he found himself amongst the bones of the elephants, and knew that this was their burial-place."

We are told also of a native belief in the connexion of a subterranean river with a remarkable well near Potoor, which tallies with Sindbad's account of his river voyage underground, where the raft rubbed against the sides and his head against the roof.

Such are the notes made by the newest of travellers in corroboration of the faith in ancient Sindbad which has of late years been steadily increasing. Saying nothing of the learned treatise upon Sindbad, written by Mr. Hole, and the notes of several French scholars and geographers, we may dwell especially upon the commentary of Baron Walckenaer, published twenty-eight years ago in a volume of a French series of *Annals of Travel*. A summary of the baron's views was given by Mr. R. H. Major, in the introduction to a recent collection of accounts of Early Voyages to India, published by our own most excellent and useful Hakluyt Society.

The Adventures of Sindbad of the Sea formerly constituted a distinct Arabic work which was no part of the Arabian Nights entertainment. They were composed of the genuine travellers' tales of probably two or three Arabic merchants who lived at the beginning, or in the middle, of the ninth century, and were contemporary with the Mahometan merchant Soliman. The trade with India is very ancient. From Ceylon, the Phœnician pilots of King Soliman's fleet brought gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Horace sang of the untouched treasures of rich India. Indians served in the ancient Persian armies. Alexander the Great laid open the way to India and an Indian trade. The luxurious Persians could not dispense with Oriental silks and gems, and ivory. Egypt was the link in trade between India and Europe. When Rome conquered Egypt, the rich Roman matrons were proud in the show of silk dresses that had cost their weight in gold. Eighty years after the conquest, in the year fifty, Hippalus, commander of a vessel in the Indian trade, stretched boldly out to sea from the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, and was carried by the south-western monsoon to a point on the coast of Malabar. The monsoon, of which the use was thus discovered, was named, after this captain, the wind Hippalus. Constantinople, after the decay of Rome, became the new centre of commerce between Europe and the East. Caravans came by Candahar into Persia, but the Persians, after the overthrow of the Parthian empire, began trading actively with Ceylon and India by way of the Persian Gulf.

Then came the time when the Arabs, conquering ground for the doctrines of their prophet, established in Persia the rule of the Caliphs on the throne of the Sassanides, and, subduing also Egypt, gained complete possession of the Eastern trade. For the direct purpose of promoting it, the Caliph Omar founded the port of Bassorah, from which Sindbad sailed.

When, therefore, on his first voyage, Sindbad has to tell the story of the snare of the King of Mahradje, we are not to be surprised at finding in the Malay Annals, translated by Mr. Leyden, the same story connected with the founding of the city of Vijanagar, in the Deccan, once a place of great importance. We conclude that the Maharajah of whom Sindbad tells was a king of the Deccan.

In the account of the second voyage, only one country is named, the peninsula of Riha, where we are told there are high mountains and camphor. Sindbad rightly describes the manner of getting camphor from the trees; he describes, also, the rhinoceros and elephant. Camphor was unknown to the Greeks and Romans. Arabs are its first describers, and the best comes from Sumatra, Borneo, and the Malay peninsula. On the Malay peninsula we find also the elephant and the rhinoceros; therefore we may assume that the Malay peninsula was visited by Sindbad—or by those merchants whose tale we have in Sindbad's second voyage.

The third voyage was to an island of fierce tattooed savages, answering to the character of natives of the Andaman Islands. A fish is described partaking of the nature of the ox, and breeding and suckling its young in a like manner. Doubtless the dugong of those coasts.

The fourth voyage was to an island—all unexplored coast was commonly spoken of as island in the middle ages—to an island where pepper was gathered. The coast of Malabar was the chief pepper ground. Thence, Sindbad went to Nacous (Nicobar); thence, in six days, to Kela, "a large empire bordering on India, in which are mines of tin, plantations of sugar-cane, and excellent camphor." This, Baron Walckenaer finds in the province of Keydah, in the Malay peninsula, opposite Sumatra.

The fifth voyage led to shipwreck on the island in which Sindbad served the Old Man of the Sea, whom he was obliged to carry on his back. Again, says Baron Walckenaer, a portion of the coast of Malabar. Ibn Batuta, who visited that coast early in the fourteenth century, says that in his time there were no horses or beasts of burden, and that everything had to be carried on the backs of men hired for the purpose. After escaping from the Old Man of the Sea, and setting sail again, Sindbad almost immediately arrived at a place where they gathered cocoa-nuts. And the chief cocoa-nut islands are the Maldives, lying opposite the coast of Malabar. Thence, he went to the pepper land—the coast of Malabar again; thence, to the coast of Comorin, in the region of Komar, which he identifies by mentioning its aloes wood. Then he went to the pearl fisheries, which are in the

Gulf of Manaar, and, having made great profit by his trading, returned home.

The sixth voyage brought Sindbad to Serendib, or Ceylon, and the seventh was again to Serendib, whither he went as 'ambassador from the Caliph. It is noticeable that Sindbad never names more than two or three places in each voyage—sometimes only one place, the destination of his trade; and that the natural history and commerce of the places named is always rightly described. The countries which are the scene of the most extravagant legends are not named at all.

But what is extravagant in Sindbad's story? Not exactly the tale of the roc. Marco Polo speaks of an extraordinary bird in Madagascar, "so large and strong as to seize an elephant with its talons and lift it into the air." He says that the Grand Khan sent inquirers into this tale, who came back with one of the bird's feathers, measuring ninety spans. We may forgive the morsel of exaggeration when we hear what modern naturalists tell of the gigantic eggs of the epyornis.

Neither must we dismiss too hastily the story of the valley of diamonds, for which good reason can be furnished. The tale of the colossal tortoise, also, can ride safely upon the broad back of the Colossochelys Atlas, of which the first fossil remains were discovered five-and-twenty years ago.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

THERE are in every generation some presumptuous men eager to expound the inscrutable, and to read for us through their narrow spectacles all that has been foreordained by the Divine Wisdom. Their choice amusement is the making an End of the World. They cannot foretell whether their mutton will be burnt at the next dinner time, but when the world will be burnt up they tell us that they do know to a year, and sometimes almost to an hour. They wish to tell us the date of its end as distinctly as the sage quoted by Chevreau in his History of the World had calculated the beginning of it to have been Friday, the sixth of September, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a period which he states in his French idiom to have been "four hours after dinner." Some say that the ending of the world will, and some say that it will not, bring about the conversion of the Jews. The belief in the end of the world is not Jewish and Christian only. A doctrine of the final tumbling together of all things into chaos was held by the old heathen philosophers and poets, taught by Empedocles and Heraclitus, sung by Lucretius and Lucan. Seneca wrote in a book of consolation, "When the time comes, and the world, seeking renewal, is destroyed, things will, by their own powers, wound each other, the stars will strike together, and when all matter is smoking with one fire, everything that now shines in its order will be burnt up."

Many later writers have informed us of the manner of the world's destruction. It is to be taken to pieces, some have taught, in the order in which, as a mechanism, it was put together; the last things added being first removed. But when the question of destroying all the stars arises, then vain man, masquerading as a prophet, has to discuss, and does boldly discuss, the probability of all the worlds that fill the heavens being inhabited like ours, and the chance their inhabitants—if they have any—may run of being destroyed with us for our sins.

Then, again, sections of speculators have decided for themselves whether the world is to be destroyed by natural agencies—as by fire from its centre, or the stroke of a comet—or by means wholly miraculous. The time to be occupied by the destruction has been also variously settled. Some know that it is a day; others have been equally sure that as there were six days of creation, so there will be also a gradual process of destruction. Some have taught that while all things upon earth were slowly decomposing into their elements, the signs foretold by the prophets would be happening. We are assured now that the signs are happening, and we are often told that men are not so large as they once were.

It was an old Jewish doctrine that the world would last six thousand years: two thousand before the Law, two thousand under the Law, and two thousand under the Gospel. In the Christian Church there has been question whether the heavens and earth were to pass wholly away, or whether only all their evil was to be destroyed out of them, and they were to be renewed.

In our own day, fashionable expounders of the secrets of the Most High dwell especially upon the thousand years that are to come before the end. Of Millenaries or Chiliasts there have been three classes: those who look for a visible reign of the Saviour during all those years, those who expect a spiritual kingdom, those who expect ten centuries of simply better days. The founder of the spiritual school, whose doctrine many of the early fathers taught, is said to have been Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, regarded as a disciple of St. John. The expectants of a material heavenly reign upon earth have their opinion traced back to Cerinthus. The doctrine of a substantial millennium was taught with enthusiasm by the anabaptists, who, at the time of the siege of Munster, circulated a book on the reconstitution of the whole world. It has been a doctrine widely held that men alive at the beginning of this period (for which the last in the list of would-be prophets has appointed the year 1867) will remain alive, and that the martyrs only will rise from their graves.

There was a time when the duration of the world was thought to be bound up with that of the Roman Empire. Then every comet, every earthquake, was a terror. Hesyehius, Bishop of Salone, wrote, in the fourth century, to Saint Augustine, asking him whether it was true that the end of the world was near. Saint Augustine

replied that a few years of respite would most probably be granted. From year to year the date was put back till the ninth century, when there was a special expectation and dread, lasting till the year one thousand, which had been definitely fixed as the term of the world's existence. During that century, many grants of estates were made to the churches and monasteries, under the formula "Termino mundi appropinquante"—"Whereas the end of the world is approaching." When the thousandth year had passed without any catastrophe, there was a new reason why gifts should be made to the clergy. A new lease was granted to mankind, and the fine payable was a renewal and re-decoration of the episcopal churches, monasteries, and chapels, which took place all over Europe. The illustrious Manuel Comnenus, in the reign of the Emperor Basil the Second, was incessantly tormented by men who would predict the very hour and moment of the end of all. This emperor, who wore monastic dress under his armour, whom his people cursed and his Church blessed, had caves prepared, in which he might take refuge, and his courtiers and flatterers were busy as ants about him, making galleries under the earth, against the time of need.

In the year eleven hundred and seventy-nine, the Eastern astrologers sent letters all over the world, announcing positively that in the middle of September, seven years after date, the end of all things would be brought about by storms of wind. Terrified men were surprised when the time came, by gentle zephyrs and the mildest autumn weather.

In the year fifteen hundred and twenty-four, there was great terror, because John Stoffer, a German astrologer, had predicted universal deluge for the month of February. There were many great conjunctions in the constellation of the Fishes, which indicated terrible mutation by flood in all lands and among all creatures. Men in France, England, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere, fled from the low grounds, and lived upon the hills. A Professor of Divinity at Alcalá wrote a book, blaming the great cost incurred in removals, and suggesting cheap ways of escape. A doctor of Toulouse built himself a boat raised on four pillars. Nevertheless this February, in which all Europe was prepared to battle with the floods, turned out to be "extremely clear and fine." In Hall's contemporary chronicle we read that in this year, because of the signs, "many persons victualled themselves and went to high grounds for fear of drowning, and specially one Bolton, who was prior of St. Bartholomew's, in Smithfield" (but the story, true as to many, was a mistake as to Bolton), "built him a house upon Harrow-of-the-Hill, only for fear of this flood, and thither he went, and made provision for all things necessary within him for the space of two months; but the faithful people put their trust and confidence only in God. And this rain was by the writers prognosticated to be in February, wherefore, when it began to rain in February, the people were much afraid, and said, 'Now it beginneth!' but many wise

men which thought that the world could not be drowned again, contrary to God's promise, put their trust in Him only, but because they thought that some great rains might fall, by inclinations of the stars, and that water-mills might stand still and not grind, they provided for meal, and yet, God be thanked, there was not a fairer season in many years. And, at the last, the astronomers, for their excuse, said that in their computation they had mistaken and miscounted in their number an hundredth yerer."

In fifteen hundred and eighty-six, the Sieur Andreas announced that in two years the world would come to an end, and that *immediately afterwards* all the powers would fall under the dominion of the Turks.

A famous book in the history of Physical Science, Whiston's Theory of the Earth, professed on its title-page to make "the Deluge and the General Conflagration perfectly agreeable to Reason and Philosophy." This reverend gentleman was—in accordance with the scanty knowledge of more than a century and a half ago—the philosophical beginner of the vulgar dread awakened still whenever a comet moves in the direction of this earth. He thought that the near approach of a comet to the earth could so retard its motion for a time as to alter the form of its path round the sun from a circle into an ellipse, "so near to the sun in its perihelion that the sun itself would scorch and burn, dissolve and destroy it in the most prodigious degree; and this combustion being renewed every revolution, would render the earth a perfect chaos again, and change it from a planet to a comet for ever after. 'Tis evident," he adds, "*this* is a sufficient cause of a general conflagration with a witness; and such an one as would entirely ruin the make of the present, and the possibility of a future world." On which last account, he proceeds to say, another method of destruction must be looked for; therefore he goes on to paint this picture, founded, we need hardly observe, upon a perfectly false notion of a comet and of many things besides. Having said that the central heat alone would burn the earth up if its surface were not kept cool by the wash of waters and the coldness of the air, he adds,

"If therefore the passing by of a comet be capable of emptying the seas and ocean and of rendering the air and its contiguous upper surface of the earth extremely hot and inflamed, no more, I suppose, will be necessary to a general conflagration. Or if any more assistance be afforded by the presence of the comet, it will be in excess, and only contribute still the more certainly, and the more suddenly, to kindle such a fatal fire and so dreadful a combustion. Now that both these requisite conditions for a general conflagration would be the consequents of this passage of the ascending comet, is plain and evident: For (1) on the approach of the comet a vast tide would arise in the great abyss; and by the new, more considerable, and more violent elevations thereof into the protuberances, and the spheroid surface of the whole, the old fissures and breaches would be opened again, and not a

few new ones generated; not only as at the Deluge, in the mountainous or more loose columns, extant above the surface of the waters of the globe; but in all parts, and under the seas and ocean, as well as in other places; which fissures must immediately swallow up the main mass or bulk of the waters upon the face of the ground, and send 'em to their fellow-waters in the bowels of the earth; which was the first and principal step towards a general conflagration. And then (2) the vapours acquired from the comet's atmosphere, which at the Deluge were, by reason of their long absence from the sun in the remote regions beyond Saturn, pretty cool; at this time must be supposed, by reason of their so late and near approach to the sun about the perihelion, exceeding hot and burning; and that to so extraordinary a degree that nothing but the idea of the mouth of a volcano, just belching out immense quantities of liquid and burning streams, or torrents of fiery matter, can in any measure be suitable to the violence thereof. Imagine, therefore, the earth to pass through the very middle of this." Thereupon Whiston proceeds to realise for us the situation in which—if he were right and if there be any sense in a reverend gentleman whose vanity we shall not feed by helping towards the publication of his name—we shall all find ourselves if we are alive, seven years hence.

For, the conflagration, Whiston shows, is the beginning of the Millennium. The burning will be at the surface, and heat will subside during a thousand years. On earth during the Millennium there will be no seas or great waters. The rub of the comet will have caused so much stoppage of the earth as to snap the link between it and the moon, who will then travel away on her own separate path. Again, the rub in a direction opposite to the earth's diurnal rotation, would so balance it as to stop its spinning on its axis. Thus there would be during the Millennium no natural day on one side of the earth, and no night on the other.

One day the Duchess of Bolton pretending to come to court in a great fright, explained that she had been at Mr. Whiston's, who told her that the world was to be burnt up in three years, and that, for her part, she was determined to go to China. Certainly that was a place quite out of the world. Horace Walpole's reflection upon the matter was: "For my own part I comfort myself with the humane reflection of the Irishman in the ship that was on fire—I am but a passenger."

In our day, End of the World cries are to be heard in plenty. We are still also taught by ingenious gentlemen, able in their own conceits to tell us who is the Beast. Greek letters represent numbers. The number of the Beast is six hundred and sixty-six. Any man's name being written in Greek letters, the numbers represented by the letters are cast up, and if their sum prove to be six hundred and sixty-six, or whatever other number that number may be interpreted to mean, the man is proved to be the

Beast. Upon this principle many a pope has been denounced, and so has Martin Luther, his name being spelt *Lauter* for this occasion only. Once upon a time Napoleon Bonaparte was detected as the Beast, and the last of this series of discoveries, not many months old, occurs in a large book entitled *Therion*, more than six hundred pages long; if the number of pages had but been six hundred and sixty-six, the book itself might have come under serious suspicion. The author of this work declares it to be "certainly a most astonishing fact that the numeric sign, sixty, ten, six, presents in full detail, and with the utmost precision, the name of Louis Napoleon." A question having been raised by a brother scholar out of the fact that the last o in the name of Napoleon ought to be written in Greek with a long o, or omega, instead of a short o, or omicron, and that this change would upset the whole calculation, the author of *Therion*, replies that the name is not Greek, and therefore is not confined as to its ending by Greek rules; "furthermore," he says, "the lexicons tell us that omega is an assemblage of two o's and I would wish to be informed, the proper spelling of a certain name being Napoleon, by what right I should proceed to write it Napoleon? And, because it is *not* Napoleon, are we to understand that this chief could not possibly have been within the view of the prophet? Why is the Holy Spirit to be bound by the rules of classical orthography? That the name alluded to should be compounded of letters common to the Greek, and the language in which the Beast's name of the latter days should be written, was to be expected, and we find it is so,—every letter in the word Napoleon belongs equally to the Greek and the modern alphabets. And this characteristic, when extended to a double name, as in the case of the present ruler of France, should at least have the effect of propitiating our judgment, for I need not mention that there are many names among us—e. g. Frederick, Alfred, William, &c.—which, not admitting of being written in Greek, could none of them be the Beast signified." There is a good deal of consolation in all this. Our gracious Queen is safe against scandal, which is more than could have been said for Queen Elizabeth. Anybody with a c, f, h not preceded by t, i, g, v, w or y in his name is safe against suspicion on this head at any rate. The same acute writer calls attention to the fact that our imperial ally is the Gallic (i. e. cock-like) chief, and thus fulfils the scriptural name of "Lucifer—Son of the Morning!"

This may sound like a burlesque on sacred things, but we simply repeat what we find in the works of the wiseacres. Upon the passage in Revelations, which says that "the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun," one interpreter, a scholar of high standing, Dr. Wordsworth, says that the sun is Our Lord Himself; another interpreter who is no scholar, Dr. Cumming, says that it is Napoleon Bonaparte.

We are ashamed that there is need to call at-

tention to the emptiness of all these false pretensions to a kind of knowledge that no man possesses. Another writer of a large book, lately issued from the press, seeing the Scarlet Woman in the Papacy, interprets for us the history of what is yet to come. Rome is yet to place her foot upon the necks of kings before she is swallowed up in the abyss at the time when the Jews, by help of money, shall have advanced themselves to the possession of the heavenly Jerusalem. "The process," says this writer, "by which the now rejected and outcast Jew is to be restored, and his city and temple to be raised from the dust and degradation of centuries to glory unexampled in the world's history till then, will involve in it the rejection of the Gentile, and the precipitation of his metropolis into the depths of the abyss, to rise no more." The means to this end he defines thus emphatically: "Money and superstition are the two chief elements of power and influence—the means by which the possessors will be most likely to obtain the objects of their worldly desires. The Jew commands the one, and the Papacy works out its ends by the other; and however determined spirits may scorn and scoff at their respective hopes and pretensions, with such weapons the scattered Israelites will assuredly enter into possession of the Holy Land, and the Papacy as certainly place her iron heel on the necks of the submissive beings of the earth."

A contemporary French wiseacre interprets Scripture for us into the cry of an approaching "End of the World through Science." The pile of science cracks under its own weight, and is about to fall in ruin on our heads. "Ignorance," he says, "of the relations of forces is the portal by which our destiny will enter. It will be the flaw in the armour through which all the race of man is one day to receive its mortal wound." It is no misstatement to say that this gentleman, M. Eugène Huzar, conceives that the last conflagration of London may arise out of one man's having set the Thames on fire. "See," he says, "round our globe, that immense ocean, with its phosphorous fires, with its oily and fat beds, with its elements so combustible that the volcanoes catch fire at it incessantly, and never go out for want of fuel till the sea shall have deserted them. See, on the other hand, this chemical product burning in the water, true Greek fire, which will lay open the road to a hundred other discoveries still more incendiary. And understand how, some day or other, conflagration may be kindled in the world." Fire set to the Thames or Seine in one of the two great capitals of science, by an unforeseen chemical accident, will spread over the Channel, raise the North Sea and the Atlantic into one great blaze, and the more water the more fire. The Pacific will blaze up, the rivers will run flame, and everything living will be roasted to a cinder.

Wherein are these our contemporary speculations better than that of the Judas who fixed Antichrist for the tenth year of the reign of

Severus, or that of Dionysius of Alexandria, who promised him in the days of Valerian, or those who promised that the end of the world should begin when Lady Day fell upon Easter-eve? An old French wiseacre, M. Jurien, taught that "Antichristianism was born about the year four hundred and fifty; it shall die about the year seventeen hundred and ten. This may happen sooner, but I do not see that it can go much farther, unless it be to seventeen fourteen." And he fixed the beginning of the Millennium for the year seventeen eighty-five, as impudently as another wiseacre now fixes it for eighteen sixty-seven. Richard Brothers, a presumptuous oracle in the same school at the end of the last century, taught that "the very loud and unusual kind of thunder heard in January, seventeen ninety-one, was the voice of the angel mentioned in the eighteenth chapter of Revelations," and fixed the fifteenth of August, 'ninety-three, for the destruction of London. "Write, write; the spirit says write," prophesied an old Suffolk woman ninety-four years ago; "the High Priest, the High Priest shall never have another Christmas dinner!"

The last, and at this particular moment most notorious, of these would-be prophets, is a doctor to whom we have already referred, who talks big words empty of wit, and streams incessantly the mouthiest of books from all his fingers' ends. He points to the wars and the police reports; tells us in his own inflated way, that "there is at present an area accumulation and intensity of morbid agencies in the air which no previous year has witnessed"—did he never hear of the plagues of the middle ages?—observes a general "dereliction of moral obligations," and fills for us a windbag of coming tribulation. "I hope," he says, "soon to publish a photographic sketch of the Millennium state, as a companion to this volume." The next step in audacity will, perhaps, be an advertisement of Heaven in the Stereoscope.

This vain man, equal to any of his predecessors in audacity, although inferior to most of them in wisdom, even favours us with a long account of the last conflagration of the world, in the style of the penny-a-liner. That "spectacle of awful grandeur" is done into a long report for us, "as seen by the happy and safe spectators, from the cloud of glory that floats their beautiful pavilion far above it. I look," he says, in the course of this outpouring, "to another part of the world; I see, what must pain some, the library of our great Museum, the yet more precious library of the Vatican at Rome, reached by the all-devouring and unsparing fire, I see the works of Gibbon and Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Shelley, and Byron cast into the flame; and as they are consumed, they send forth volumes of sulphurous and intolerable smoke. I see the works of Milton and Shakespeare, and Scott, and the masterspirits of every age of our country, blazing in the flames, while they shoot up only in brilliant sparks that have all the splendour of the lightning, and all its evanescence too." That

passage affords a fair text of the mind of the man who is now warning us—as others, many of them better educated in their day, and less presumptuous in tone—have warned those who lived before us concerning scores of other years, “that eighteen sixty-seven is to be the great crisis, the testing crisis in the events of history, in the fulfilment of prophecy, and in the experience of man.” The words overweigh the meaning even in that little sentence; but to any one who seeks a certain sort of notoriety, it is a blessing to be round-mouthed.

The last of the wiseacres, of course reminds us that the prophets have been stoned. Every simpleton who is discredited, is free to talk of Galileo; every quackery, from the Mortality Pill upward and downward, expects ridicule, and is resigned to it as the fate of truth that shines before its day. Ridicule suffered by the wise and true men of our race has been the shield worn ostentatiously by every quack for the last century or two. But for a single word, we do not know whether we read from the works of Holloway or Morison, or Hahneman or Doctor Cumming, or a Spirit-Rapper, when we find a preface ending with “I need not add that, like all my previous volumes on prophecy, this will receive plenty of that style of secular criticism which consists in scoffs, ridicule, and caricatures.” For prophecy and secular we may read pills and regular, or homeopathy and allopathic, or spiritualism and secular, but the rest of the form is but the old stereotype. It is gross arrogance for a man to add upon a question about his own speculations, as the writer here does, that “the world cannot endure the truths of prophecy.” Humble endeavour at interpretation—and what labour demands humility so much?—wins the respect due to it. But when a man puts forward his own ostentatious claim to be of the school of the Prophets—even although he has the moderation to be satisfied with a bargain of the impossibility of lasting credit, for a seven years’ lease of certain notoriety that shall expire when in due course his promissory note upon the future is dishonoured—he attracts a notice by which he must not hope always to be flattered.

OUR EYE-WITNESS ON THE ICE.

ONCE every year, the earth suffers from a seizure of a violent and savage nature, which brings hidden benefits with it, but administers them with a rough hand: much as a man might fling a purse of gold at your head, hitting you a nasty knock, while he conveyed at the same time certain advantages compensating for the accompanying thump.

This attack—it is called a Frost—is sometimes but an affair of a day or two in and about London; sometimes it lasts for weeks together; while sometimes it comes and goes, and hangs about us like an intermittent fever. It is, however, always sudden in assault. A short warning of unusual fog and darkness is given, and lo! we wake one morning at five, while it is yet dark;

we say, “It has turned suddenly cold;” we hear the subsiding crack of the fuel of our long-extinguished fire as it sinks together; we stretch out a reluctant arm for our wadded dressing-gown, and make use of it as a supplementary blanket. Nay, we harpoon towards us the shooting-jacket from the chair by the bedside, and bivouac under that also, and, in spite of all, and after all, we find that “we can’t get to sleep again for the cold.”

The symptoms develop rapidly: the London boys outside give tongue, and though thinly clad, shout to each other in congratulation on this opportunity of effecting much slide-mischief on the pavement; the New-road is dotted with fallen horses; the cabs move at a foot pace; the water is hard to come at; the pipes are frozen and roar all day, meaning to burst when the thaw comes; the wet towels on the horse by the window, become stiff with ice; and a variety of other inconveniences occur which cause the human race generally to be slow in rising from bed, to be prone to good living, to get grimy about the knuckles, to be apt to graze the same against angles of furniture, to feel sore in the eyes and torpid towards evening, and to make the best possible excuses for a second glass of punch before retiring for the night. In short, it is undeniable that of the four elements the air has the best of it now. It has locked the earth and the water up tight, and even the fire cannot hold its own, and affects a very small circle just round about it, and no more.

It is not long before rumours go forth that the Serpentine—or, as some will have it, the Circontime—will bear, and away rushes the populace to disport itself upon the broad expanse of its waters, or to stand in safety on the shore, scoffing at the misfortunes of its more venturesome members. Away rushes the populace, and, after them, away rushes the Eye-witness, to take note of the predominant characteristics of the scene.

Peppermint and oranges are the predominant characteristics. Hot, fiery, appetite-destroying peppermint, and cold, pale, grief-engendering oranges. It is impossible to stir five paces, without coming in contact with a tray full of peppermint drops, or a basket lined with blue paper to set off its cargo of oranges. There is evidently a reaction of the stomach contemplated in this provision. The orange, which is hideously unripe and cold, produces such internal anguish that the consumer of it rushes off for peppermint to allay his torment; while the heated diaphragm of the peppermint eater calls loudly within him for the ever near orange. Nay, in some cases, there are to be found humane men who sell the bane and antidote together, having a division in their baskets with oranges on one side and peppermint drops on the other.

These two articles of consumption having it all their own way, it follows that the vendor of three-cornered tarts with a dab of jam couchant, in a field of pale paste, must come off second best, while the purveyors of gingerbread, roasted chestnuts, oily Brazil nuts, and even of hot elder

wine, are left nowhere in the race. Not so the merchants of walking-sticks; there is a brisk demand for them, a walking-stick being much affected by your inexperienced skater. Indeed, such a supplementary prop is a serviceable thing, and, whether planted on the ice to support the beginner—in which case it always slips away from him—or flourished wildly in the air to the detriment of the eyes of other skaters, is a graceful and convenient appendage.

The man who has brought what looks like an engine of torture, but which is really an instrument for ascertaining the height, weight, and strength of those who may be anxious for information on those subjects, has made a sad mistake. What could he hope for, but the neglect with which he is treated? Did he think that skaters who had measured their length on the ice would come and test the truth of their estimate afterwards, or that persons of corpulent proportions would wish to ascertain whether they were too heavy to venture on the ice.

Among the component members of the crowd upon the banks, two great classes are to be found: the people who suffer from the cold, and the people who enjoy the cold. These last might sometimes surely be less defiantly hardy, with great advantage to themselves and others. It is most aggravating to see Old Bellows, for instance, always stamping about and thumping his chest with the perpetual old phrase about the bracing nature of the air. We have no objection to his being braced, far from it; but there is no occasion for him to make such a fuss about it, as if it were a very creditable thing to be braced, and as if nobody were braced but himself. Let him be braced quietly and modestly, and let poor little Wriggles, who is home on sick leave from India, and is shivering his soul out, decline to be braced if he likes.

The single member of the Rifle Corps, who walks up and down with a lady on his arm, dressed in uniform, and with a red cock's plume in his cap, is sufficiently punished by his own feelings and by the sneers of passers-by, and may be left without further censure or comment. But the young man who has brought ladies with him to see him skate, and who, while his skates are being put on, becomes paler and paler with every added strap—this young man who, when at last fully equipped and launched forth upon the world of ice, instantly falls down with a sickly giggle as if he enjoyed the joke,—this personage, we say, is of some importance, because he at once leads us to that analysis of falls, that great dissection of the art of tumbling, which the world has hitherto strongly felt the want of.

Shakespeare, when he puts into the mouth of Touchstone that celebrated dissertation on the different degrees of removal in a quarrel, is able, it will be remembered, to dispose of his subject under seven heads. It is not so with the degrees of tumbling. This voluminous and most important topic can be done justice to, in no fewer than eight divisions. A greater degree of condensation, a more merged classification, have been attempted,

but the result was found to be imperfect, and the reader may depend upon the subjoined analysis as being reduced to the narrowest limits compatible with a complete examination of the subject.

There are—to deal with the matter after the Touchstone manner—eight degrees, forms, or modes of tumbling—no more, and no less. There is, first, the "Fling utter;" secondly, the "Smash complicated;" thirdly, the "Stagger victorious;" fourthly, the "Scramble ineffectual;" fifthly, the "Drop sudden;" sixthly, the "Fall facetious;" seventhly, the "Tumble truculent;" and, eighthly and lastly, the "Crash unresisted."

Let us now examine each and go into this fearful subject a little more in detail, beginning at the beginning, with the Fling utter. He who having attained the highest possible degree of speed known in the annals of skating, strikes suddenly against some particle of foreign matter which has become embedded in the ice—be it a stone, a frozen twig, or what not—he who when thus checked, finds his feet cast up into the air, and presently his body in such violent contact with the ice that he slides along upon his shoulder and his ear, fifteen yards, before his legs have descended to the same level with the portions of his anatomy just hinted at—this man, and he alone, knows what it is to have experienced the Fling utter. It is a condition of tumbling wholly dependent upon, and inseparable from, a great degree of speed, and is intimately associated with that phenomenon known to skaters as "the outside edge." This Fling utter is a piteous accident. It is frequent and terrible, and is attended by the following symptoms: a smart tingling in the ears, a sensation as of a rush of blood to the back of the head, a vision before the eyes of numerous black tadpoles ornamented with diamond frontlets or coronets and floating in the air, a sudden taste of base metal in the mouth, a conviction on the part of the sufferer that his neck has become shorter, that his vertebrae are jammed together, that his heart is between his teeth, that his legs are in his body, that his body is up in his head, that his stomach is collapsed, that his hands are affixed to his ankles and his feet joined on to his wrists. Let us get on to the Smash complicated.

This is an accident strangely connected with peculiar states of the nervous system. You see a man swooping down upon you; you have time to avoid him, but you can't; a hideous fascination draws you on, you meet with a dread concussion, you embrace him and cling to him, and he to you; your hat drops off, so does his; you perform together a frenzied waltz, which brings you to a slide; you are falling; remember, all this time, the sliders descend upon you, and you form the centre of an entangled mass of arms, legs, and bodies, in which no person can identify his own, till, the great crash over, the sufferer crawls out of this seething mass of humanity on his hands and knees, and very commonly finds a recess or dimple in his hat, which

brings the career of that article of costume to an untimely end. This is a brief history of the Smash complicated, so called from the number of persons involved in it, and the manner in which all the victims of the accident become mixed up together in one common ruin.

We now come to the Stagger victorious, and the Scramble ineffectual. It has doubtless been the lot of most persons, who have looked on at the sport of skating, to have their attention drawn to the conduct of some individual engaged in that pastime, who suddenly, and for some unexplained reason, flings his head and body back, stamps seven times with the heels of his skates, whirls his arms around, casts his stick into a distant parish, plunges forward, swerves, advances several hurried paces, stamps more wildly than before, revolves, clutches at the air, bows himself double, again flings himself back, recovers himself and his balance without any actual fall, and stands perfectly still for several minutes, with his hands supporting the small of his back. This is the Stagger victorious, concerning which it may be said, in one word, that it is a mistake, and that it is better to tumble down at once than to rick the back, strain the abdomen, and dislocate the limbs generally, by the manœuvres just described. But if the Stagger victorious be a mistake, what is the Scramble ineffectual—a performance in which our acrobat goes through the whole of the above-mentioned extravagances, and tumbles down after all? This is the most disappointing and the most humiliating of all modes of falling: the unhappy victim of the Scramble ineffectual having secured the attention of everybody present by the prolonged struggle which precedes his ruin.

Perhaps, however, the most undignified of all tumbles is that which has been characterised as the Drop sudden. It is a very simple transaction, commonly unattended with serious results, and consists, to put the affair in two words, of a sudden (and involuntary) sitting down act on the part of the sufferer, who drops, without any apparent cause, upon the ice in a sitting posture, with his legs stretched out straight in front of him. It has been remarked, by great observers and profound thinkers, that the patient in this case will ordinarily remain in this position for some minutes before attempting to rise; that he is apt to look about him, and that, after picking up his hat which the Drop sudden invariably jerks off, he will take a handkerchief therefrom, and carefully blow his nose whilst still in the sitting posture. From these observations, the profound thinkers aforesaid have drawn the conclusion that the Drop sudden is a less alarming seizure than any other to which skaters are liable.

Let us speak of the Fall facetious. The Fall facetious is in its earlier stages intimately mixed up with the Scramble ineffectual. It is generally preceded by the same resistance and staggering, and even the fall itself has no distinguished character of its own. It is in this case a question of the tumbler and not of the tumble. He who treats his fall in the facetious manner

will (with anguish in every limb) get up with a smiling countenance, joining the laugh against himself, and even sometimes muttering in a gay manner disparaging remarks about his own clumsiness, or faintly humming a lively air. Let no person be taken in by this. Instances have been known, in which sufferers by the Fall facetious have skated for three minutes and a half after their accident just as if nothing had happened, have then cast a hurried look around the swift circle in which they have been performing, and, coming to the conclusion that nobody was looking, have limped off to some secret island, and have been found there, hours afterwards, sitting among the water-fowl and groaning with anguish.

The Fall facetious, though a less candid, is a more amiable view of our subject than that exhibited in the Tumble truculent. The Tumbler truculent is a man of a somewhat savage but a sincere and open character, who, when he is in a rage and in considerable bodily discomfort, is at no pains to conceal the fact. It is his habit, as is the case with most dangerous characters, to dine early, and he has come out to skate immediately after his meal. Under these circumstances the shock of a severe fall is no doubt anything but conducive to digestion, yet is this no efficient defence of the fury with which the Tumbler truculent turns upon the small boy upon the bank and asks him "What the devil he is laughing at?" It must not be forgotten that (at least as far as the present writer's knowledge extends) the Tumble truculent has not arisen from any fault on the skater's part. He has either been tripped up, or has stumbled over some defect in the ice; and the tripper-up, or the ice itself, as the case may be, will at such times come in for certain remarks which are the reverse of complimentary. It is a fatal error to display emotion on the ice, and a man will meet with no sympathy who resents his fall as a deadly injury.

We have now got in our examination of this great subject to the eighth and last division of falls, and the Crash unresisted remains alone for consideration. Perhaps, of all the orders of tumbling, there is none so opposed to this last upon the list as the Scramble ineffectual. Just as the skater in that instance declined to accept his doom, so in the case of the Crash unresisted, he takes the accident as it comes, makes no resistance, and only devotes the half-instant between the flying of his legs into the air and the descent of his body upon the ice, to a rapid act of self-preservation, in so ordering his fall that the fleshiest portions of his frame and not the more bony angles shall sustain the full force of the impending crash. This is perfect wisdom, and, in carrying it out, he will find the advice of Sancho Panza, on the best means of enduring a blanket-tossing, of incalculable service. "If such mishaps do come," he says, "there is nothing to be done but to shrug up one's shoulders, hold one's breath, shut one's eyes, and let oneself go whither fortune and the blanket please to toss one."

With this invaluable piece of advice, the Eye-witness thinks he may bring the more analytical part of his subject to a close, introducing only a few concluding remarks on tumbles generally, which are required to complete the usefulness of his treatise. The writer having studied the art of skating for twenty years, and having always aimed at its higher achievements, has, perhaps, had as many falls as most men, and is, consequently, in a condition to speak about this matter as authoritatively as another. He would suggest, then, for the consideration of psychologists, a theory about which he has little doubt himself, though it certainly sounds a little startling at first. He holds that tumbling is infinitely more a thing of the mind than of the body. The writer has observed that, after a hard day's work, he will be apt to fall oftener than after a day of less mental exertion, and he has also noticed that one fall (if it hurts) begets another, and that at such times the injured part of the frame is exactly that portion which comes in for damage again: which has entirely resulted from a sensation in the mind of horror at the thought of another blow on the tender place. But, perhaps, the strongest support of all to this theory of the mental or cerebral origin of tumbles is to be found in the fact that any attempt on the part of a skater to *show off*, is invariably attended with a series of disasters calculated to wound the feelings, both mental and bodily, of the exhibitor in no ordinary degree.

Let us illustrate this, with an instance. No sooner have those two young ladies with the groseille rosettes outside their bonnets, with cheeks which the frost has nipped into the loveliest pinkness conceivable, and escorted by convenient brothers just home for the holidays—no sooner have those interesting young persons approached the ring of ice on which our skater is engaged, than the troubles of the unhappy man begin. He ceases to complete his skates, he passes from one to the other too rapidly; in his anxiety to achieve tours de force beyond his reach, he rushes upon an outside edge with more impetus than he can deal with safely, and the Fling utter is the consequence. He is skating *at* those two young ladies; his wandering eye is for ever covertly watching the effect of his performance, when it ought to be helping him to steer clear of impending dangers; his nerves are unstrung; he says to himself, "Good Heavens, what a failure it would be if I were to get a fall!" and instantly down he goes.

One more instance in support of this theory. It is well known that all success in the world has the effect of surrounding him who has been able to attain it, with a band of admiring and watchful parasites. Now, successful skating is more indicative of strength of limb than of force of mind, and a man may be a dexterous skater, and yet have a weak head. There is nothing more common than such a combination, and he who is thus constituted, completely upset by his own triumphs, and in a manner carried away by his own legs, will frequently lose himself so

far as to hold forth to the admirers and satellites who invariably surround him, upon the subject of skating, and even to illustrate his meaning at times by an attempt to show the neophyte whom he is instructing, the stroke, or combination of strokes, which it is his province to describe. Woe to such men! Woe to him who says, "If you'll allow me, I will show you what I mean." If that man fail to dislocate a limb in the tumble which ensues, he may think himself well out of it.

Enough has now been said to prove to demonstration the frequent mental origin of disasters on the ice, and with this last fall we will let the subject fall also, and get on to other things.

Get on to the bridge over the Serpentine, and observe how colour, in this vast assemblage of people, goes for nothing, and how the eye is struck by nothing but black and greyish white: the crowd entirely showing in patches, larger or smaller, of black, and the greyish white of the ice or the frosty earth being their background. Get on to the other bank and shudder as you read the board which limits the hours for bathing in the Serpentine. Bathing in the Serpentine before daylight, and with only that small pool to bathe in, which is kept for the ducks!

Get on to a consideration of the ducks themselves—the frozen out ducks who don't know what to think of it at all, who make short excursions on the ice, and, finding it a failure, return to their small domain where the ice is broken for them, and turn themselves upside down, for inexplicable reasons, in the water, as if they didn't mind the cold.

Get on to where the small capitalist, whose stock in trade consists of a rough deal box, turned bottom upwards, and with a string attached to it, is giving ha'penny rides upon the ice to abject boys, who call this vehicle a sledge, and shout and yell for joy as they sit astride it.

And having got on through all these matters, and having arrived safely at the end of the Serpentine from which we originally started, we may stand there for half a minute and ponder over one or two questions connected with ice and skating, before we run shuddering home to a furious fire and the best dinner that circumstance accords us.

What becomes of ice-men and skate-lenders in summer? In summer, quotha? What becomes of them during eleven months of the year? These strange and fearful-looking men, who work the machinery of the Royal Humane Society—these men with inflated air cushions on their stomachs, and hopeless-looking cork life-preservers over their shoulders—what becomes of *them* when the Serpentine is not frozen over? Look again at these mysterious throngs and armaments of skate proprietors, men who pass a shuddering and frostbitten existence, intimately allied with gimlets impaired at the point, and bradawls of doubtful sharpness—what becomes of these men and of their rows of sorry skates for hire, when no ice is to be found except at the fishmongers' and the pastrycooks'? This

race is a race apart. They are not like other men. They are never tall, never fat, never thin. What becomes of these men, your Eye-witness demands, during the summer months and "in the season of the year?" What becomes of them and of their stock, their sorry skates, their impaired gimlets, their pointless bradawls, their strips of bedside carpet, and their wheezy chairs? These are awful questions! To look at these men, they are like bill-stickers. But can they belong to that valuable fraternity? Hardly; for if so, who would stick the bills on our walls while these mysterious personages are sticking the skates on our feet? Are they members of some league or guild, which supports them through the year? Are they and the icemen, bound up as they are by common interests, allied in such a society; and do they spend their summer together, the skate proprietors fixing the sorry skates on the feet of the icemen, taking them off again immediately, and then tumbling through trap-doors provided for the purpose, and being straightway hooked up again with the apparatus of the Humane Society, for practice?

The season for skating is so short and uncertain in this country, that little or no legislative attention has been bestowed upon the best means of regulating the condition under which that pastime may be most safely practised. Short, however, as the season is, the list of accidents which annually occur is long enough to justify the bestowal of some degree of attention upon this subject. In the first place (to take the most important class of accidents, those, namely, which affect life), is there any reason why our ornamental waters should have a greater depth than two or three feet? If, as their name implies, these artificial lakes are simply intended for ornament, that purpose would surely be answered by two feet of water as well as by twenty. The difficulty, if there be any, with regard to the fish, is unworthy to be put in the balance for a moment; if they cannot live in the shallow water, they may go. There is, indeed, but one doubt that can affect this question, and that is, whether a great depth of water is necessary to prevent stagnation. On this, the present writer is unable to give an opinion, but the subject is well worthy of the attention of those who may be acquainted with such matters, being one by which, beyond the shadow of a doubt, human life is annually lost.

A miss is *not* as good as a mile in all cases, and when the point of a walking-stick has been within a quarter of an inch of your eye, you are not (as to the nerves) as well off as if it had never attained such proximity to the organ in question. The wild flourishing of sticks by skaters in their attempts to preserve a balance must have struck—in more senses of the word than one—everybody who has spent much time on the ice as one of the most annoying and aggravating dangers they have had to encounter. A disaster produced by this practice of carrying sticks, so prevalent among bad skaters, has occurred this year. It is enough to say that the

thing is excessively dangerous, that *sticks are of no use to skaters whatsoever*, and that they should not be allowed in the hands of any one engaged in skating.

These two are the main questions in connexion with this topic, which really seem, as affecting life and limb, to call for some little attention. It would be curious to examine the books of our hospitals and of the Royal Humane Society, with a view to ascertain how many of the accidents which one frost has brought about, might have been prevented by a more serious recognition of the great importance of that annual visitation.

ANOTHER WHITSTABLE TRADE.

If it had not fallen to the lot of Whitstable to be celebrated for its oysters, and its company of "free dredgers,"* it might have claimed a word of notice for producing that rarest of all workmen, the sea-diver. As the oyster exerts such an obvious influence upon Whitstable men, and lives at the bottom of the sea, it would almost seem as if this stationary shell-fish were the father of this other Whitstable trade.

The Whitstable divers may be from thirty to fifty in number, strong, stout, healthy, temperate men, who look like able-bodied sailors. Though not incorporated as a joint-stock company, and protected by a charter, like their friends and neighbours, the free-dredgers, they form themselves, by a kind of Whitstable instinct, into a working brotherhood, under the presidency and guidance of a captain—Mr. Green. Mr. Green is not a diver himself, and has never been under water, either in the helmet or the bell; but he directs the labour of those within his command, purchases their chances for a certain fixed payment before they dive, and acts generally like that very useful, but oftentimes much-abused "capitalist," without whom so few trades can be successfully carried on.

In stormy seasons, when the wreck of some heavily-laden homeward-bound vessel is an every-day occurrence round our fatal coast, the rooms at the King's Head Inn, in Whitstable, the house of call for divers, are very thinly attended, and the men, with their boats and apparatus, are hurried off in all directions to profitable work. Mr. Green is then in the hourly receipt of telegrams from Lloyd's, or from private owners, requesting him to send "four divers to Moelfre," and four more "to the Goodwin Sands." If a vessel tilts over, as it did the other day in the Victoria Docks, Mr. Green is communicated with to furnish help; and his divers are sometimes sent for from the West Indies, and distant, unknown seas.

These men go down to work in the diving dress, until they are sixty or seventy years of age. The dress consists of a waterproof body suit, to keep them dry and warm; very heavily-weighted boots, to keep them steady and on their legs; and the well-known helmet with the glass-eye

* See No. 31, pp. 113, 14, 15, and 16.

windows, which is furnished with air pumped from the boat above down an elastic tube. So hideous does this dress appear to animals as well as to human beings, that every kind of fish flies from it in dismay. In going down in the West Indian waters, where sharks are painfully plentiful, the Whitstable diver found his unsightly armour a sufficient protection, and his large-toothed enemies darting away from him, without offering the slightest attack.

The depths that the Whitstable diver has most frequently to go to, are ten to fifteen fathoms, or sixty to ninety feet. He sometimes ventures to eighteen fathoms (one hundred and eight feet), but seldom goes beyond, as the weight of water above his head impedes his movements, and the longer his air-tube is paid out, the more difficult it becomes to supply him with sufficient air. The sharp pain in the ears, as if a couple of quills had been thrust into them,* is nearly always felt by the diver during the first three or four fathoms of his descent, though it goes off some little time before he reaches the deck of the sunken ship. This pain is caused by the condensed air in the helmet, and the sensation is precisely similar when the diving is performed in a bell.

When the vessel has settled down in a sandy bottom, it is preserved, for many months, from breaking up; and its position may be much the same as it would be when floating in calm water, if it be not tilted over by any under-current drifts. The light, of course, depends a good deal upon the depth, and upon the nature of the bottom; but, where there is no chalk to give a milky thickness to the water, the diver pursues his work in a kind of gloomy twilight. By the aid of this, he can see and feel his way round the ship; but when he ascends to the deck, and winds down into the principal cabins, he finds everything pitch dark, and has nothing to guide him but his hands. This is the most difficult, and yet the most frequent, labour he has to encounter; the danger being that, in a large vessel, where the cabin stairs are deep, and the cabins are long and broad, he may get his air-tube twisted round some unfamiliar projection, and so squeeze off his supply of life from above. In positions such as this, he requires all his nerve and self-possession, all his power of feeling his way back in the exact road that he came. He may have got the precious casket, to which he has been directed, in his arms; but what of that, if he die before he can find the stairs? The cold, helpless masses that bump against his helmet, as they float along the low roof over his head, are the decomposed corpses of those who were huddled together in the cabin when the ship went down. A few of these may be on the floor under his feet, but only when pinned down by an overturned table or a fallen chest. Their tendency is upward—ever upward—and the remorseless sea washes away the dead infant from its dead mother's arms, the dead wife from her dead husband's embrace. If the wreck be

in the Channel, the small crabs are already beginning to fatten on their prey.

The diver disentangles himself from this silent crowd, and ascends the welcome stairs to the deck. The treasure he has rescued, is hauled up into the attendant diving boat; and he turns again to renew his work. He seldom meets with an accident, under water; never, perhaps, with death, and the chief risk he runs is from getting some heavy piece of ship lumber overturned on his long train of air-pipe. Even in this case he feels the sudden check and the want of air, gropes his way back to the obstruction, removes it, signals to his companions to be raised, and reaches the boat exhausted and alarmed, but not so much so as to give up his place in the trade. His earnings mostly take the form of shares in what he recovers. If fortunate, his gains may be large; if unfortunate, they may be small; but no man can grudge him the highest prizes it is possible for him to win. May Whitstable always have the honour of producing such bold and dexterous men as plentifully as she has hitherto done, and may they have the wisdom to keep what they get!

STREET SIGHTS IN CONSTANTINOPLE.

You, London reader, have seen wonderful things in your time; the sham sailor in the New-road, with a painting of a storm in the Bay of Biscay rolled out between his wooden legs, which rest as sentinels on either side of it; the man in Gower-street, about dusk o' summer evenings, who comes round to the area railings with illuminated cathedrals, and other precious transparent trifles; the little lump of a man on a trencher, selling nutmeg-graters, who propels himself along Regent-street with a wooden flat-iron in either hand; the Bearded Woman (penny admittance) in Holborn, close to Tottenham-court-road; the blind man with the tremendous eyebrows, dragged along Oxford-street at an irreverent and disrespectful pace, by the unbroken-in, rampant, smooth terrier; but let me tell you what I saw near the Horse Bazaar at Constantinople, on a certain October morning.

I had crossed the famous wooden bridge that brackets Stamboul and its hills, to the opposite hills of Pera, and, turning to the left, had mounted the steps, thronged by itinerant Greek and Turkish dealers, which lead towards the Bazaars. I had passed the strings of white candied figs, the goloshes, the grapes (white, yet blued here and there by weaker brothers, that had turned into bloom-covered raisins); and shunning the incessant water-sellers, I had had a glass of port-wine-looking sherbet from a man with a large tin vessel on his back, the mouth of which was closed with a huge cudgel of ice, which had turned crimson from the juice it had imbibed. One or two streets further on, I had again drowned my thirst, which seemed to turn my throat into a kiln, and the very breath of my lungs into flame. I had tampered

* See No. 11, page 249.

with another man, who carried in a leather skin, some curious brown liquid of a nutty flavour, and a medicinal colour. Not a street further, and I was found, from sheer high spirits and sociability, discussing prices with an old Turk, who carried about some sort of golden gummy sweetmeat, in a round tin pan, much patronised.

I had just escaped the fierce Mamaluke charge of a wild Nubian eunuch, who, mounted on an entire Syrian horse, was dashing him up the street at such a lathering pace, that it sent the fire out of the stones like the running twinkle that at lamp-lighting hour you see spreading in the distance up Piccadilly. Whether he was trying to kill the horse or to sell him, I don't know, but the only thing I had ever seen like it before, in a decent city, had been a London butcher's boy, spurring with food to a starving family in May Fair, and a young doctor giggling it at an express-train velocity, to convey an idea to a passing coroneted barouche of the vast extent of his practice.

Thanking Allah for this deliverance, I stopped a moment among the stalls crowded with old saddles, bits, and bridles of the Horse Bazaar (Aat Bazaar), meditating over the numerous reminiscences that abound there of our blundering prodigality during the Crimean war. I stayed to see, at the call of prayer, one of the most rascally of the dealers, prostrate himself, and go through his ceremonies with all the formality of the incumbent of Saint Barabbas on the vigil of St. Simony; just as I was breaking from this nest of sharking traders, and resisting pressing offers to buy a fat Syrian sheep with a fleshy apron of tail some two feet broad, I started, because, at the foot of a bread-seller's stall, I saw a sight as horrible to me as if Coleridge's nightmare, Death in life, had stepped from behind a curtain, and seized me by the throat.

And yet it was only a little yellow shrivelled old Turk with opiated eyes, Whithy jet without the polish, who sat cross-legged before a little three-legged wooden stand on which was laid *a dead man's arm*. It was the mendicant's own arm evidently, or at least I could see he claimed it by the quiet look of triumph he gave when he saw my involuntary start. He felt an intellectual satisfaction in seeing the bird go into the trap, the more so, as he himself had with some pains made the trap, and at some personal sacrifice supplied the bait I now saw laid horizontally on the jammed and bruised English tea-tray that stood on the little altar of a tripod. Like an experienced fisherman, he gave me time to gorge before he struck. He had missed often, I dare say, from striking too soon, while the hook still vibrated suspiciously only about the fish's lips; he would now strike home when he struck, so he prayed to Allah, saying:

"May Allah grant it!" I asked as much of Allah. "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet! May this infidel have a short life, and heavy punishment of Eblis!"

All this or fragments of it I could indeed hear, for Turkish mendicants are always telling

their rosaries or muttering their prayers, and he little thought I had some inkling of his sweet-sounding, rude language. It was time—"quick there with the landing-net!" He gathered himself together to address me: that is to say, he carefully drew out his stump, readjusted the dead arm on the tray in a becoming pose, and with the authoritative manner of a landlord handling his own fixtures, he pulled his beard sorrowfully (there the mendicant's game began), and gave his face a pained expression as if he had just borne an operation. It was only after seriously performing the graceful salutation which prevails all through the East, and supersedes our blunter Saxon hand-shaking, that he pronounced, with the air of a pasha, the one word of salutation, "Salamet, sultanim!" (Peace, O sultan!)

Grave and solemn impostors are these Orientals, and to meet them in the dark winding passages of their artfulness, one has to relearn one's European Rogue's Catechism, and say it backwards. Indeed, a Turkish rogue has, astonishing to say, more the air of an English popular preacher than anything else. Slowly again, as I went and took up the limb, did that solemn cheat press his hand upon his chest (quasi heart), and then lightly with the tips of his fingers, brothers of those crumple thin yellow ones I now moved about, touch his forehead, or quasi brain, and ejaculated, with the up-turned eyes of gratitude not unknown upon our own religious platforms,

"Khosh gueldiniz, safa gueldiniz!" (You have come in safety, oh, may you depart in safety!) "Hai guideh Inglis!" (O these brave English!) "Amriniz chok olsun, effendim!" (May your life be long, effendim!) And then, at the end of every two or three words, a chanted, sonorous groan, after the manner of the moolahs, of "Thanks be to God!" No rogue perhaps ever erected such costly machinery, or reared such cumbrous scaffolds, to obtain merely an infidel's halfpenny.

At that moment, as I was still examining the atrophied arm, cut off just under the elbow, feeling its mummy yellow skin, its dark nails and bent skeletony fingers, uncertain how far I should pretend to understand the rogue's conversation for fear of spoiling my game; on the one hand knowing that a rogue on his guard is worth nothing to the observer, no, not even if he be a Great Chimborazo Railway director; and, on the other hand, very loth indeed to leave the spot without hearing at least the Turk's own version of his bereavement (more sincerely lamented than many bereavements, I warrant), a Deus stepped in, and politely undid the knot of Gordium.

The Deus was a little handsome fleshy-lipped Jew boy, Benjamin, who haunts the Pera hotels, to guide travellers to the lions, and who was now jaunty and gay (two piastres at least, in his bank, I should say), his large, half-Armenian eyes dancing with fun, came up with a smile of triumph in his face at seeing an old customer in a mess, and evidently requiring his profes-

sional help. A doctor in small practice who has succeeded in running over a rich City man by accident, could not leap upon the suffering creature with more polite alacrity and overflowing philanthropy than did handsome Benjamin on me.

In a moment Benjamin was by my side, had performed his salutation, and entered on a short but brilliant dragoman and cicerone's career. The Turk smiled, Benjamin smiled; they looked on me as a dead hare between the paws of two strong-limbed greyhounds, agreeing, yet uncertain how to divide him. The Turk took up his arm, and lectured on it gracefully; all other passers-by, even that tall eunuch, in rose-colour silk and patent boots, are to him now indifferent; it is the rich English sultan he wants to land.

The story ran thus, and was on the whole episodic. Neither Benjamin nor the Turk supposed I understood them:

Benjamin.—Now, then, old Eski-Beski, out with your story for this infidel sultan, and how much am I to get?

Turk.—Allah be merciful, my son, Benjamin; one piastre is, I think, enough for thee, from this rich infidel's treasure (curse and wither him!); tell him I lost my arm when I was a groom of the great Pasha; and—

Myself.—Why don't you tell me what he says, Benjamin?

Benjamin.—He says, your Excellency, may your life be long, your wives beautiful, and your offspring numerous; that he once rode fiery Turcoman horses for his Sublime Highness, and that on a certain day, as he was in the Atmeidan, where the column is, under which much gold and treasure was buried by Constantine, a soldier's djereed struck the untamable beast (defile his grave!), and that after a dreadful struggle, leaving hoof marks, still to be seen on the wall of the mosque of the Sultan Achmed, he was thrown and his arm broken. This wound would, however, with Allah's blessing, have soon recovered, had not a poor dervish, to whom he had refused alms (this was a fine side-wind touch—I winced, as they both saw, and Benjamin spat to hide a laugh), cursed him in the name of Allah and the Prophet. From that time the arm got worse and worse, the bone sloughed, a hopeless running set in, and at last, to escape death, or a lingering disease (even more horrible than death), he had the arm cut off, and there it is.

At this conclusion, as, indeed, had been the case at the end of every sentence, Benjamin sighed, and the little old Turk turned up his eyes, "Thanks be to God!" as if losing a bone were, in his opinion, rather one of kind Providence's best bonuses.

I looked much satisfied, and took up the arm and weighed it, as you are expected to do with a friend's baby.

Said I to Benjamin, in a friendly and duped voice, "That is a great deal of English for a little Turkish."

Not a "levator labii superioris" moved its pulpies, as that young dragoman replied:

"Thanks be to Allah" (these Jew touts and

parasites always affect Turkish phraseology), "he has given the people of this worthy man"—the Turk nodded and stroked his beard, seeing he was mentioned, and readjusted the loose arm—"a brief, yet beautiful language."

"Ask him," I said, assuming a solicitous tone, "for how many piastres he will sell this embalmed limb, of which Allah has deprived him."

Here a long and intricate conversation ensued between Benjamin and the Turk; for this great result had never suggested itself to even Benjamin's sanguine and precocious mind. It sounded like a grinding up of my old friends the Turkish numerals. Each rogue seemed what young ladies call, "doing the scales" with the numerals. Now, "bir" (one) came up, then you heard, "own" (ten), now "elli" (fifty), then presently, "yüz" (one hundred).

They stopped. Benjamin advanced, with all the fun out of his eyes, and put on the semblance of a herald dictating terms. He spoke gravely, which did him credit; and the old Turk bent forward with all the eagerness of Shylock before the Doge:

"In the month of Abib of this year, Mustapha Effendi says, chilibi (sir), a rich pasha, whose name he has an objection to mention, reined up his horse just where you, chilibi, stand, and offered him five hundred piastres—good money—not paper—for that treasure of an arm, but Mustapha refused, and dismissed him with his blessing."

I placed three silver piastres (sixpence sterling in all), bright as spangles, in the dead hand palm, wished worthy Mustapha a "Peace be with you!" to which he returned a "God forbid that I should forget you!" and walked away; to the jackal Benjamin I flung a large copper piece, much to his instant loathing and horror; and, as I truded quickly off, with a surreptitious glance back at the exploding mine, I saw both rogues, as if by agreement, spit execrately on the ground, and exclaim, loud enough for me to hear them, in one deep breath: "Allah! hai guideh kafer!" (Allah! what a hideous infidel!)

Heaven forgive me, how many rogues I have, in my small way, led on to exhibitions of lying and hypocrisy—smugglers, with cigars in red pocket-handkerchiefs, at London street corners; foreign princes in distress, outside Wyld's Globe; castaway sailors in the City-road; mechanics with clean aprons, pelting first-floor windows in Gower-street with hymns; and soapy-faced secretaries of fraudulent charities. I have many sins to answer for, and these stand high amongst them.

Let not the patient reader imagine, however, that the city of the Sultan is infested with beggars like Naples; where eyeless men lay hold of you as you walk up the Toledo; where there is a complete competition of rival stumps and sores, and where, at every shop door, parasites still more odious abound, who "beg a thousand pardons, but may they be allowed the infinite happiness of removing a speck of mud from Eccellenza's coat-tail."

No; the streets of Stamboul are grave, solemn, almost monastic. No files of men with sandwich boards, no cripples on trenchers, no blind men and cubs, no old women and dancing dogs, no barrel-organs or white mice, no distressed mechanics or sham fits, with placards, "Don't bleed me—give me brandy-and-water," ready written, clenched in their stiff right hands; in fact, seldom anything amusing in the way of sham misery—by day, frothing at the mouth with soft soap, and at night revelling on beef-steak suppers—but only here and there a poor doubled-up old hag, with ophthalmic eyes, crouched under a wall, with a cup-like hand held out, as she chants verses from the Koran, in that horrible, nasal, monotone peculiar to the Turks. Oftener, you meet the santon, rather mad—if you may believe his eyes—begging for a Dervish brotherhood; or a wandering fakir, with dirty elf locks, perhaps from India, in streaming robes, and with the usual wooden shoe (for alms) slung by a chain to his arm. His begging is so insolent and imperious that it reminds you of the old soldier in *Gil Blas*. Two causes keep down Turkish mendicancy: the first, the few wants of a Turk; the second, the charity of their richer men. Where a cake and a few figs are food for the day, and where alms are largely given, and alms-giving forms part of the religious creed, there cannot be much distress.

Hence it is that the beggars bear away rather to the Frank side of the city, and haunt the bazaars and places where foolish and rich Franks are wont to congregate. The bridge of boats is their special resort. Here, just a few feet from the toll lodges, at imminent risk of death from bullock carts and arabas, they squat in rows, some twenty at each end, and remain there all day, clacking out their songs and hymns, and pattering supplications in the name of Allah and the Prophet. Stop a moment from curiosity, or detained by the crowd, and they open upon you like a pack of hounds, chattering, and singing, and shaking the show pence in their brass bowls and their tin dishes.

How well I remember one old lady, with eyes like red button-holes, with which she ogled me with what she thought resembled motherly affection! Next her was a dreadful monster of a lean Arab, bared to the knee to exhibit, with pardonable pride, a left pedestal that exactly resembled, in colour and shape, a chair leg: the knee standing for the ribbed ornament above, the lower part, no larger round than an ebony flute, for the shank. Once, too, I met three blind men, walking along in file, ponderingly and anxiously, each of them with his right hand on the left shoulder of his predecessor, and the first man, with a due sense of his responsibility as Prime Minister—that is, blind leader of the blind—groping with his hand along the white wall of the Seraglio gardens. Sometimes I encountered a sort of groping Elymas old man, led about by a boy, who, shamefully indifferent to the patriarch's optical infirmity, munched a peach as he towed the senior along.

But Galata, that home of black cloth and respectability slightly streaked here and there with fraudulent bankruptcy, has street celebrities of its own, and foremost among them is Baba, the old crafty-looking woman decently robed in white, who sits all day on the doorstep of one of the Galata stores, swaying backwards and forwards, chanting now an objectionable song, now a hymn, according to the character of the person whom she sees coming. She is as well known in Galata by everybody, from the head banker to the poorest clerk of a swindling house, as the Lascar who sweeps the crossing at the Edgeware-road is to West-end people, or the pretty Irish girl who in June sells moss-roses at the Exchange is to every stockbroker. Report says that she is rich, and that young Galata merchants who, for a joke, have pretended to be "hard up," and have, to try her, asked their old pensioner, Baba, for help, have received I don't know how many silver piastres. Scandal says that Baba has really ulterior motives in pretending to be a beggar, that she is really a spy, and waits about in public places to watch the movements of certain people and their exits and entrances for Russian or for French Government officials. I can scarcely look at the sleek, dark woman's crafty face and believe this; but I am, I confess, inclined to accord with a still darker rumour, which asserts that Baba is a sort of slave merchants' agent, and that, when men are to be trusted, and are rich enough to be depended on, this Satanic matron arranges with them the traffic of beautiful Georgians' bodies and souls. Yet who would think that in busy London streets that man who ran against you with his heavy carpet-bag, and then took off his hat and begged your pardon so civilly, had a dead murdered man's body in it! In these days Satan, throwing off his horns and clipping close his stinged tail, walks amongst us with Inverness cape on and wears kid gloves like the best of us. So Baba, though outwards a decent, well-dressed matron, in appearance not unlike our old Hindoo friend the Begum of Bangalore, may, after all, be a vile, concealed slave-dealer.

But though Baba never let me pass without a smile and greeting, and a cry for "the smallest money," my special pet, among the objects of Constantinople, was Nano Papisillo, the Greek dwarf, a little microscopic man whom you might have put in a hand-box without difficulty. I first saw him one day that I was scaling the hill of Pera. Butted by porters, and jostled by asses, laden with everything from peaches to brickbats, I was looking into a tobacconist's window, not far from the great Genoese tower, just to rest myself.

Suddenly, at my elbow, I heard coming up, as if out from the very wall that lined the road, a little, lisping, attenuated falsetto voice, such as you would fancy would have proceeded from an Irishleprechaun, or such as *Æsop* must have heard when Wisdom spoke to him from the lips of tortoise or of bullfrog. If the wall had itself addressed me in an Eastern apologue, like the faded vision of *Mirza*, such a voice I should have

expected it to have taken. I looked round more in curiosity and alarm, and saw on a small doorway stone, seated, and bowing gravely to me, the little celebrity whom I trust I may be permitted to my very worthy friend, Nano Papisillo, the sbitten, but still worthy, scion of an old Greek stock. (Why an *old* stock should be better than a new stock, or what a *new* stock means, I never could yet ascertain, believing myself all souls of equal value before God—but I use the jargon of the day.)

Milton, meeting for the first time Sir Geoffrey Hudson at the corner of Fleet-street, by St. Bride's Church, could not have been more amused and astonished than I was to see the little man—a most choice twinkle of self-satisfaction on his droll face, staring old eyes, and fatuous protruding mouth—performing the Eastern salutation, with all the decorum of a French dancing-master newly appointed, by some strange coincidence, Sultan. It was a salute that would almost have become a gentleman, but that in a humble patient way which made one quite love the little fellow—it had a touch, the slightest in the world, of mendicancy—it was a little too thrust forward, a little too much obtruded on attention, for it suggested, in the tenderest, and yet most unmistakable manner, "Alms, for the love of Heaven, for a poor little abortion, permitted to live for some good and gracious purpose; feed him, therefore, in the name of Allah, who made both him and thee, both the great Sultan and this thy poor dwarf."

He bent, and bowed, and touched his heart with his hand, like a little duodecimo Lord Chesterfield; then, without vulgarly screaming and scolding for alms, or without driving texts into me to torment me into charity, Papisillo gracefully began telling me his age and prospects, and branching off into general matters of national and political importance, irrelevant but entertaining.

It really made me ashamed, to look at that little bundle of humanity—that little lump of intelligence—that man who, compared with a fat friend of mine then in my mind's eye, looked but as a pimple, a creature with a large caricature head, spindly spider hands, and no body or legs at all to mention—to see him, not cynical, not a black dwarf, not a misanthrope, not a hermit, nor a critic, nor a bilious, malicious historian, but a cheery, sociable, happy being, always smiling in his own queer, droll way, and rather enjoying his publicity than otherwise. And here was my friend "the hot blood," Lacy Rocket, the Queen's messenger, whom I just left cheapening a Persian poniard in the Arms Bazaar, with life, spirits, and the reversion of eight thousand a year and a baronetcy, always yawning and being bored with every amusement and pleasure that luxury and extravagance could suggest! Only one hope of amusement left him, and that he pines for—elephant-shooting; not having this, he vows human nature is a fool and the world "a bass." Rather than be blasé at five-and-twenty, I would cut off my legs, send them home in a hamper, *via* Marseilles,

and turn mendicant dwarf in the streets of Stamboul. Papisillo was thirty-five, this little man told me confidently; he was not yet married, though he hoped (here he smiled rather vainly) that that happy event would not be long deferred. He was cheerful, thanks be to God, and grateful for many mercies. As to moving about, of course he could not; he was carried every day in a basket to some special station that he selected, now this side, now the other side, of the bridge. His father still lived, and was a good father to him.

It completed my moral lesson, and gave me infinite delight when I put some piastres in the little screwed-up hand, to see those strange eyes twinkle with tears, the little crooked hand move ceremoniously to the breast and forehead, and the little mandarin body bob up and down with a serious yet droll politeness till I was out of sight. Why this little Greek dwarf had never been bought for a Turkish household, I don't know, but I suppose the want of legs made Papisillo more naturally an object of charity.

Jesters, I suppose, are now changed to theatrical clowns, but the real Eastern dwarf still flourishes in Turkey. I saw him several times: now, with important face elbowing his way through the Pera crowd, with bowed legs, splay feet, enormous head and hydrocephalic prominence of brain; now, with a settled look of ridiculous refinement, holding the hand of some black eunuch who, with turban of lemon-coloured cashmere and crimson sash, was preceding one of the little painted egg-shell carriages in which the whitewashed and rouged ladies of some great man's harem were taking the air: the dwarf's look of monstrous malice and vanity setting off the childish beauty and inane splendour of Lolah, Katinkah, and Dudu, who, in gold-coloured, violet, and chocolate satins, peered through their yashmak wrappings like painted corpses whose dead beauty is horrible to behold.

In street shows, Stamboul is not rich, for the Turks are a serious people who go to bed early, and who, even if they did not, dare not venture out in unlighted streets when they know that at night the very paving-stones turn into dagger-blades. The few sights there are, being of the humblest kind, are all by day, and are intended more for the mere loungers and stranger than for the Turk pur sang, the lord and master (as long as he can keep it) of this once Christian country.

To get a relish of the safety of home, the traveller in Turkey has only to remember that anywhere, and at any time, a half involuntary shout of execration at the Prophet, or a self-asserting blow at a true Mussulman of any "position"—by which snob word I mean, of course, wealth—a sacred pigeon killed in the "Birds' Mosque," a defiant shout in St. Sophia, a stone thrown into a room of dancing dervishes, and in three minutes his rash blood would probably smoke on the pavement.

It was a day so hot, that you might have cooked a chop in five minutes on my friend the

fez-maker's door-stone. The air was like hot water, and Cain's curse was realised merely when sight-seeing. I was working my way slowly, through many impediments to my favourite, and everybody's favourite, haunt, the bazaars, which, if the sun rained fire outside, would still be cool and shady as a monk's cloister, or as the London Docks wine-cellars.

I was looking, now, at an old Turk making vermicelli; now, at a turner rounding wooden blocks for fez caps—for these Turkish shops are all open to the passer-by, and are, indeed, mere covered stalls—when I heard, down the street, which was so crowded that I could not see far before me, the long, melancholy blare of a key bugle, evidently suffering from asthmatic diphtheria. It was a querulous, violent, shriek of a blast, blown, not in a smart, military, formal, dry manner, but in a vagabondish, meretricious, hopeless, tricky, yet desponding style. I wondered for a moment, then asked no questions of the crowd, but pushed on. That bugle was the bugle of Paillasse! the bugle of the itinerant, or, if stationary, only for a moment stationary, mountebank.

A minute or two's walk brought us (for, that energetic public servant, Rocket, was, by this time, with me) to the door of the small shop at which the trumpeter stood. Hewas a grimy Greek, with greasy black hair escaping from under a large, baggy, red fez cap; and he wore a greasy embroidered jacket, and a full-pleated white kilt, stained, torn, and unwashed. With one hand to his mouth, and the other holding down the old bed-curtain that hid the exhibition, he was now and then turning to two large, but rude cartoons, drawn with black chalk on white paper, which hung up behind him. They represented two biped monsters with hoofs and horns and tail, just like the Apollyon in old editions of the Pilgrim's Progress. They were both hairy, and both bound round the waist, for security, with immense chains. But there was this difference between them: that while one had the old Satanic type of head with glaring eyes, and a bird's face, the other was more human in bearing, and stood up, with an ancient tower in the background, and held a halberd in his right claw. There was not a smile on the face of the showman, nor a smile on the face of the crowd, as with an appearance of perfect good faith he screamed the good tidings that

"Within were to be seen two monsters (some thought devils), that had lately been caught in the deserts of Anatolia, and had been, at an immense expense, by permission of the Sultan, brought alive to Stamboul. Admission, one para" (halfpenny).

"Allah be praised!" cried one or two grey-headed Turks. But people seemed shy of entering, because one or two sly Perotes stood by and laughed or whispered.

Rocket said, "By Jove, sir, let us go in and

chaff 'em." I assented, and the Greek, with a gracious bow and a blast of triumph on his bugle, cautiously let us pass under the dirty striped curtain.

I scarcely knew what I expected to see—perhaps a poor panorama, perhaps a stuffed bear, or an orang-outang—something that would not go down with drunken sailors at Greenwich Fair, or with the smallest and dullest English country town thirsting for amusement. Yet I could not have believed that even to the gross ignorance of a Turk, a showman would have dared to exhibit a live devil.

But there he was (the other, the showman told me, had died from confinement), pacing up and down, in a clumsy and rather shame-faced way, in a sort of stall of a stable newly planked up with the most solicitous care and anxiety. The fiercest man-eating tiger, or the most tearing maniac, could not have been hooped up more timidly. In fact, what with the planks and what with the opaque curtain at the entrance, it was some minutes before my eyes got sufficiently acquainted with the light, to be able to distinguish a man, impudently sewn up in a sort of hairy grey rug, which covered face, body, and hands, and yet left some outline of form visible. A vulture's beak, two bullock's horns, and two enormous brown-glass bullock's eyes, completed the flagrant impersonation. I tried, with limited modern Greek, to "chaff" the monster, and so did Rocket, who got violent, and wanted to poke him with a walking-stick. The devil, feeling himself alluded to, considered it professionally necessary to shake his chain, and walk up and down in a silent manner, as if longing to get at us and "eat us without salt." But he did it in such a slinking, downcast, shame-faced way, that, contrasting with his sting-tail, horns, and tremendous eyes, it drove us to shrieks of laughter.

We went out, Rocket pinching old Turks by the arm, and confidentially whispering in their ears, "Pek ayi" (very good). Upon which some dozen enthusiasts, exclaiming with one voice, "Allah is wonderful!" poured in, and dragged down the curtain.

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